At the Sign of The Lyre

NE VILE VELIS

Francis George Newbolt

857

Hubert M. Burge

June 18th
1887

H. M. B.

d. d.

amicas amico

F. G. N.

pp. 204. 86.

I, liber, officio non perfunctarus in ami,
Si nostra dederis pignus amicitiæ.

[The verses in this collection and in *Old-World Idylls*, 1883, comprise all those pieces which the author, at present, desires to preserve. The larger part of *At the Sign of the Lyre* now appears for the first time in England in book form; the remainder is derived from volumes which are out of print.]

AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE

Fourth Edition.

"Two Sermons"

At the Sign of The Lyre

By

AUSTIN DOBSON

leviore plectro

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO

MDCCCLXXXVI

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TO

EDWIN A. ABBEY

AND

ALFRED PARSONS.

"At the Sign of the Lyre,"
Good Folk, we present you,
With the pick of our quire—
And we hope to content you!

Here be Ballad and Song,
The fruits of our leisure,
Some short and some long,—
May they all give you pleasure!

But if, when you read,
They should fail to restore you,
Farewell, and God-speed—
The world is before you!

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AT THE SIGN OF THE LYRE.

THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S.

A PROPER NEW BALLAD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE TOWN.

THE ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

The ladies of St. James's
Wear satin on their backs;
They sit all night at *Ombre*,
With candles all of wax:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She dons her russet gown,
And runs to gather May dew
Before the world is down.

The ladies of St. James's!
  They are so fine and fair,
You'd think a box of essences
  Was broken in the air:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
  The breath of heath and furze,
When breezes blow at morning,
  Is not so fresh as hers.

The ladies of St. James's!
  They're painted to the eyes;
Their white it stays for ever,
  Their red it never dies:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
  Her colour comes and goes;
It trembles to a lily,—
  It wavers to a rose.

The ladies of St. James's!
  You scarce can understand
The half of all their speeches,
  Their phrases are so grand:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
  Her shy and simple words
Are clear as after rain-drops
  The music of the birds.

The ladies of St. James's!
  They have their fits and freaks;
They smile on you—for seconds,
  They frown on you—for weeks:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
  Come either storm or shine,
From Shrove-tide unto Shrove-tide,
  Is always true—and mine.

My Phyllida! my Phyllida!
  I care not though they heap
The hearts of all St. James's,
  And give me all to keep;
I care not whose the beauties
  Of all the world may be,
For Phyllida—for Phyllida
  Is all the world to me!

THE OLD SEDAN CHAIR.

"What's not destroy'd by Time's devouring Hand?
Where's Troy, and where's the May-Pole in the Strand?"
BRAMSTON'S "ART OF POLITICKS."

IT stands in the stable-yard, under the eaves,
Propped up by a broom-stick and covered with leaves:
It once was the pride of the gay and the fair,
But now 'tis a ruin,—that old Sedan chair!

It is battered and tattered,—it little avails
That once it was lacquered, and glistened with nails;
For its leather is cracked into lozenge and square,
Like a canvas by Wilkie,—that old Sedan chair!

See,—here came the bearing-straps; here were the holes
For the poles of the bearers—when once there were poles;
It was cushioned with silk, it was wadded with hair,
As the birds have discovered,—that old Sedan chair!

"Where's Troy?" says the poet! Look,—under the seat,
Is a nest with four eggs,—'tis the favoured retreat

Of the Muscovy hen, who has hatched, I dare swear,
Quite an army of chicks in that old Sedan chair!

And yet—Can't you fancy a face in the frame
Of the window,—some high-headed damsel or dame,
Be-patched and be-powdered, just set by the stair,
While they raise up the lid of that old Sedan chair?

Can't you fancy Sir Plume, as beside her he stands,
With his ruffles a-droop on his delicate hands,
With his cinnamon coat, with his laced solitaire,
As he lifts her out light from that old Sedan chair?

Then it swings away slowly. Ah, many a league
It has trotted 'twixt sturdy-legged Terence and Teague;
Stout fellows!—but prone, on a question of fare,
To brandish the poles of that old Sedan chair!

It has waited by portals where Garrick has played;
It has waited by Heidegger's "Grand Masquerade;"
For my Lady Codille, for my Lady Bellair,
It has waited—and waited, that old Sedan chair!

Oh, the scandals it knows! Oh, the tales it could tell
Of Drum and Ridotto, of Rake and of Belle,—
Of Cock-fight and Levee, and (scarcely more rare!)
Of Fête-days at Tyburn, that old Sedan chair!

"*Heu! quantum mutata,*" I say as I go.
It deserves better fate than a stable-yard, though!
We must furbish it up, and dispatch it,—"With Care,"—
To a Fine-Art Museum—that old Sedan chair!

TO AN INTRUSIVE BUTTERFLY.

"Kill not—for Pity's sake—and lest ye slay
The meanest thing upon its upward way."
FIVE RULES OF BUDDHA.

I WATCH you through the garden walks,
I watch you float between
The avenues of dahlia stalks,
And flicker on the green;
You hover round the garden seat,
You mount, you waver. Why,—
Why storm us in our still retreat,
O saffron Butterfly!

Across the room in loops of flight
I watch you wayward go;
Dance down a shaft of glancing light,
Review my books a-row;
Before the bust you flaunt and flit
Of "blind Mæonides"—
Ah, trifler, on his lips there lit
Not butterflies, but bees!

You pause, you poise, you circle up
  Among my old Japan;
You find a comrade on a cup,
  A friend upon a fan;
You wind anon, a breathing-while,
  Around AMANDA'S brow;—
Dost dream her then, O Volatile!
  E'en such an one as thou?

Away! Her thoughts are not as thine.
  A sterner purpose fills
Her steadfast soul with deep design
  Of baby bows and frills;
What care hath she for worlds without,
  What heed for yellow sun,
Whose endless hopes revolve about
  A planet, *ætat* One!

Away! Tempt not the best of wives;
  Let not thy garish wing
Come fluttering our Autumn lives
  With truant dreams of Spring!
Away! Re-seek thy "Flowery Land;"
  Be Buddha's law obeyed;
Lest Betty's undiscerning hand
  Should slay . . . a future PRAED!

THE CURÉ'S PROGRESS.

MONSIEUR the Curé down the street
Comes with his kind old face,—
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

You may see him pass by the little "*Grande Place*,"
And the tiny "*Hôtel-de-Ville*";
He smiles as he goes, to the *fleuriste* Rose,
And the *pompier* Théophile.

He turns, as a rule, through the "*Marché*" cool,
Where the noisy fish-wives call;
And his compliment pays to the "*belle Thérèse*,"
As she knits in her dusky stall.

There's a letter to drop at the locksmith's shop,
And Toto, the locksmith's niece,
Has jubilant hopes, for the Curé gropes
In his tails for a *pain d'épice*.

There's a little dispute with a merchant of fruit,
Who is said to be heterodox,

That will ended be with a "*Ma foi, oui!*"
And a pinch from the Curé's box.

There is also a word that no one heard
To the furrier's daughter Lou.;
And a pale cheek fed with a flickering red,
And a "*Bon Dieu garde M'sieu!*"

But a grander way for the *Sous-Préfet*,
And a bow for Ma'am'selle Anne;
And a mock "off-hat" to the Notary's cat,
And a nod to the Sacristan:—

For ever through life the Curé goes
With a smile on his kind old face—
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

THE MASQUE OF THE MONTHS.

(FOR A FRESCO.)

FIRSTLY thou, churl son of Janus,
Rough for cold, in drugget clad,
Com'st with rack and rheum to pain us;—
Firstly thou, churl son of Janus.
Caverned now is old Sylvanus;
Numb and chill are maid and lad.

After thee thy dripping brother,
Dank his weeds around him cling;
Fogs his footsteps swathe and smother,—
After thee thy dripping brother.
Hearth-set couples hush each other,
Listening for the cry of Spring.

Hark! for March thereto doth follow,
Blithe,—a herald tabarded;
O'er him flies the shifting swallow,—
Hark! for March thereto doth follow.
Swift his horn, by holt and hollow,
Wakes the flowers in winter dead.

Thou then, April, Iris' daughter,
Born between the storm and sun;
Coy as nymph ere Pan hath caught her,—
Thou then, April, Iris' daughter.
Now are light, and rustling water;
Now are mirth, and nests begun.

May the jocund cometh after,
Month of all the Loves (and mine);
Month of mock and cuckoo-laughter,—
May the jocund cometh after.
Beaks are gay on roof and rafter;
Luckless lovers peak and pine.

June the next, with roses scented,
Languid from a slumber-spell;
June in shade of leafage tented;—
June the next, with roses scented.
Now her Itys, still lamented,
Sings the mournful Philomel.

Hot July thereafter rages,
Dog-star smitten, wild with heat;
Fierce as pard the hunter cages,—
Hot July thereafter rages.
Traffic now no more engages;
Tongues are still in stall and street.

August next, with cider mellow,
  Laughs from out the poppied corn;
Hook at back, a lusty fellow,—
August next, with cider mellow.
Now in wains the sheafage yellow
  'Twixt the hedges slow is borne.

Laden deep with fruity cluster,
  Then September, ripe and hâle;
Bees about his basket fluster,—
Laden deep with fruity cluster.
Skies have now a softer lustre;
  Barns resound to flap of flail.

Thou then, too, of woodlands lover,
  Dusk October, berry-stained;
Wailed about of parting plover,—
Thou then, too, of woodlands lover.
Fading now are copse and cover;
  Forests now are sere and waned.

Next November, limping, battered,
  Blinded in a whirl of leaf;
Worn of want and travel-tattered,—
Next November, limping, battered.
Now the goodly ships are shattered,
  Far at sea, on rock and reef.

Last of all the shrunk December
Cowled for age, in ashen gray;
Fading like a fading ember,—
Last of all the shrunk December.
Him regarding, men remember
Life and joy must pass away.

TWO SERMONS.

BETWEEN the rail of woven brass,
That hides the "Strangers' Pew,"
I hear the grey-haired vicar pass
From Section One to Two.

And somewhere on my left I see—
Whene'er I chance to look—
A soft-eyed, girl St. Cecily,
Who notes them—in a book.

Ah, worthy GOODMAN,—sound divine!
Shall I your wrath incur,
If I admit these thoughts of mine
Will sometimes stray—to her?

I know your theme, and I revere;
I hear your precepts tried;
Must I confess I also hear
A sermon at my side?

Or how explain this need I feel,—
This impulse prompting me
Within my secret self to kneel
To Faith,—to Purity!

"AU REVOIR."

A Dramatic Vignette.

Scene.—*The Fountain in the Garden of the Luxembourg. It is surrounded by Promenaders.*

Monsieur Jolicœur. A Lady (*unknown*).

M. Jolicœur.

'TIS she, no doubt. Brunette,—and tall:
A charming figure, above all!
This promises.—Ahem!

The Lady.

Monsieur?
Ah! it is three. Then Monsieur's name
Is Jolicœur? . . .

M. Jolicœur.

Madame, the same.

The Lady.

And Monsieur's goodness has to say? . . .
Your note? . . .

M. JOLICŒUR.

Your note.

THE LADY.

Forgive me.—Nay.

(*Reads*)

"*If Madame* [I omit] *will be*
Beside the Fountain-rail at Three,
Then Madame—possibly—may hear
News of her Spaniel. JOLICŒUR."

Monsieur denies his note?

M. JOLICŒUR.

I do.

Now let me read the one from you.

"*If Monsieur Jolicœur will be*
Beside the Fountain-rail at Three,
Then Monsieur—possibly—may meet
An old Acquaintance. '*INDISCREET.*'"

THE LADY (*scandalized*).

Ah, what a folly! 'Tis not true.
I never met Monsieur. And you?

M. JOLICŒUR (*with gallantry*).

Have lived in vain till now. But see:
We are observed.

THE LADY (*looking round*).

I comprehend . . .

(*After a pause.*)

Monsieur, malicious brains combine
For your discomfiture, and mine.
Let us defeat that ill design.
If Monsieur but . . . (*hesitating*).

M. JOLICŒUR (*bowing*).

Rely on me.

THE LADY (*still hesitating*).

Monsieur, I know, will understand . . .

M. JOLICŒUR.

Madame, I wait but your command.

THE LADY.

You are too good. Then condescend
At once to be a new-found Friend!

M. JOLICŒUR (*entering upon the part forthwith*).

How? I am charmed,—enchanted. Ah!
What ages since we met . . . at *Spa?*

THE LADY (*a little disconcerted*).

At *Ems*, I think. Monsieur, maybe,
Will recollect the Orangery?

M. Jolicœur.

At *Ems*, of course. But Madame's face
Might make one well forget a place.

The Lady.

It seems so. Still, Monsieur recalls
The Kurhaus, and the concert-balls?

M. Jolicœur.

Assuredly. Though there again
'Tis Madame's image I retain.

The Lady.

Monsieur is skilled in . . . repartee.
(How do they take it?—Can you see?)

M. Jolicœur.

Nay,—Madame furnishes the wit.
(They don't know what to make of it!)

The Lady.

And Monsieur's friend who sometimes came? . .
That clever . . . I forget the name.

M. Jolicœur.

The Baron? . . . It escapes me, too.
'Twas doubtless he that Madame knew?

THE LADY (*archly*).

Precisely. But, my carriage waits.
Monsieur will see me to the gates?

M. JOLICŒUR (*offering his arm*).

I shall be charmed. (Your stratagem
Bids fair, I think, to conquer them.)
(*Aside*)
(Who is she? I must find that out.)
—And Madame's husband thrives, no doubt?

THE LADY (*off her guard*).

Monsieur de BEAU—? . . He died at *Dôle!*

M. JOLICŒUR.

Truly. How sad!
(*Aside*)
(Yet, on the whole,
How fortunate! BEAU-*pré*?—BEAU-*vau*?
Which can it be? Ah, there they go!)
—Madame, your enemies retreat
With all the honours of . . . defeat.

THE LADY.

Thanks to Monsieur. Monsieur has shown
A skill PRÉVILLE would not disown.

M. JOLICŒUR.

You flatter me. We need no skill
To act so nearly what we will.
Nay,—what may come to pass, if Fate
And Madame bid me cultivate . . .

THE LADY (*anticipating*).

Alas!—no farther than the gate.
Monsieur, besides, is too polite
To profit by a jest so slight.

M. JOLICŒUR.

Distinctly. Still, I did but glance
At possibilities . . . of Chance.

THE LADY.

Which must not serve Monsieur, I fear,
Beyond the little grating here.

M. JOLICŒUR (*aside*).

(She's perfect. One may push too far.
Piano, sano.)
(*They reach the gates.*)
Here we are.
Permit me, then . . .
(*Placing her in the carriage.*)
And Madame goes? . . .
Your coachman? . . . Can I? . . .

THE LADY (*smiling*).

Thanks! he knows.
Thanks! Thanks!

M. JOLICŒUR (*insidiously*).

And shall we not renew
Our . . . "*Ems* acquaintanceship?"

THE LADY (*still smiling*).

Adieu!
My thanks instead!

M. JOLICŒUR (*with pathos*).

It is too hard!
(*Laying his hand on the grating.*)
To find one's Paradise is barred!!

THE LADY.

Nay.—"Virtue is her own Reward!"
[*Exit.*

M. JOLICŒUR (*solus*).

BEAU-*vau*?—BEAU-*vallon*?—BEAU-*manoir*?—
But that's a detail!
(*Waving his hand after the carriage.*)
AU REVOIR!

THE CARVER AND THE CALIPH.

(WE lay our story in the East.
Because 'tis Eastern? Not the least.
We place it there because we fear
To bring its parable too near,
And seem to touch with impious hand
Our dear, confiding native land.)

Haroun Alraschid, in the days
He went about his vagrant ways,
And prowled at eve for good or bad
In lanes and alleys of BAGDAD,
Once found, at edge of the bazaar,
E'en where the poorest workers are,
A Carver.

Fair his work and fine
With mysteries of inlaced design,
And shapes of shut significance
To aught but an anointed glance,—
The dreams and visions that grow plain
In darkened chambers of the brain.

And all day busily he wrought
From dawn to eve, but no one bought ;—
Save when some Jew with look askant,
Or keen-eyed Greek from the Levant,
Would pause awhile,—depreciate,—
Then buy a month's work by the weight,
Bearing it swiftly over seas
To garnish rich men's treasuries.

And now for long none bought at all,
So lay he sullen in his stall.
Him thus withdrawn the Caliph found,
And smote his staff upon the ground—
"Ho, there, within! Hast wares to sell?
Or slumber'st, having dined too well?"
"'Dined,'" quoth the man, with sullen eyes,
"How should I dine when no one buys?"
"Nay," said the other, answering low,—
"Nay, I but jested. Is it so?
Take then this coin, . . but take beside
A counsel, friend, thou hast not tried.
This craft of thine, the mart to suit,
Is too refined,—remote,—minute ;
These small conceptions can but fail ;
'Twere best to work on larger scale,
And rather choose such themes as wear
More of the earth and less of air,

The fisherman that hauls his net,—
The merchants in the market set,—
The couriers posting in the street,—
The gossips as they pass and greet,—
These—these are clear to all men's eyes,
Therefore with these they sympathize.
Further (neglect not this advice !)
Be sure to ask three times the price."

The Carver sadly shook his head ;
He knew 'twas truth the Caliph said.
From that day forth his work was planned
So that the world might understand.
He carved it deeper, and more plain ;
He carved it thrice as large again ;
He sold it, too, for thrice the cost ;
—Ah, but the Artist that was lost !

TO AN UNKNOWN BUST IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

"*Sermons in stones.*"

WHO were you once? Could we but guess,
We might perchance more boldly
Define the patient weariness
That sets your lips so coldly;
You "lived," we know, for blame and fame;
But sure, to friend or foeman,
You bore some more distinctive name
Than mere "B. C.,"—and "Roman"?

Your pedestal should help us much.
Thereon your acts, your title,
(Secure from cold Oblivion's touch!)
Had doubtless due recital;
Vain hope!—not even deeds can last!
That stone, of which you're *minus*,
Maybe with all your virtues past
Endows . . a TIGELLINUS!

We seek it not ; we should not find.
But still, it needs no magic
To tell you wore, like most mankind,
Your comic mask and tragic ;
And held that things were false and true,
Felt angry or forgiving,
As step by step you stumbled through
This life-long task . . of living !

You tried the *cul-de-sac* of Thought ;
The *montagne Russe* of Pleasure ;
You found the best Ambition brought
Was strangely short of measure ;
You watched, at last, the fleet days fly,
Till—drowsier and colder—
You felt MERCURIUS loitering by
To touch you on the shoulder.

'Twas then (why not?) the whim would come
That howso Time should garble
Those deeds of yours when you were dumb,
At least you'd live—in Marble ;
You smiled to think that after days,
At least, in Bust or Statue,
(We all have sick-bed dreams !) would gaze,
Not quite incurious, at you.

We gaze ; *we* pity you, be sure !
In truth, Death's worst inaction
Must be less tedious to endure
Than nameless petrifaction ;
Far better, in some nook unknown,
To sleep for once—and soundly,
Than still survive in wistful stone,
Forgotten more profoundly !

MOLLY TREFUSIS.

"Now the Graces are four and the Venuses two,
And ten is the number of Muses;
For a Muse and a Grace and a Venus are you,—
My dear little Molly Trefusis!"

SO he wrote, the old bard of an "old magazine:"
As a study it not without use is,
If we wonder a moment who she may have been,
This same "little Molly Trefusis!"

She was Cornish. We know that at once by the "Tre;"
Then of guessing it scarce an abuse is
If we say that where Bude bellows back to the sea
Was the birthplace of Molly Trefusis.

And she lived in the era of patches and bows,
Not knowing what rouge or ceruse is;
For they needed (I trust) but her natural rose,
The lilies of Molly Trefusis.

And I somehow connect her (I frankly admit
That the evidence hard to produce is)
With BATH in its hey-day of Fashion and Wit,—
This dangerous Molly Trefusis.

I fancy her, radiant in ribbon and knot,
(How charming that old-fashioned puce is !)
All blooming in laces, fal-lals and what not,
At the PUMP ROOM,—Miss Molly Trefusis.

I fancy her reigning,—a Beauty,—a Toast,
Where BLADUD'S medicinal cruse is ;
And we know that at least of one Bard it could boast,—
The Court of Queen Molly Trefusis.

He says she was "VENUS." I doubt it. Beside,
(Your rhymer so hopelessly loose is !)
His "little" could scarce be to Venus applied,
If fitly to Molly Trefusis.

No, no. It was HEBE he had in his mind ;
And fresh as the handmaid of Zeus is,
And rosy, and rounded, and dimpled,—you'll find,—
Was certainly Molly Trefusis !

Then he calls her "a MUSE." To the charge I reply
That we all of us know what a Muse is ;
It is something too awful,—too acid,—too dry,—
For sunny-eyed Molly Trefusis.

But "a GRACE." There I grant he was probably right ;
(The rest but a verse-making ruse is)

It was all that was graceful,—intangible,—light,
The beauty of Molly Trefusis!

Was she wooed? Who can hesitate much about that
Assuredly more than obtuse is;
For how could the poet have written so pat
"*My* dear little Molly Trefusis!"

And was wed? That I think we must plainly infer,
Since of suitors the common excuse is
To take to them Wives. So it happened to her,
Of course,—"little Molly Trefusis!"

To the Bard? 'Tis unlikely. Apollo, you see,
In practical matters a goose is;—
'Twas a knight of the shire, and a hunting J.P.,
Who carried off Molly Trefusis!

And you'll find, I conclude, in the "*Gentleman's Mag.*,"
At the end, where the pick of the news is,
"*On the* (blank), *at* '*the Bath*,' *to Sir Hilary Brag,*
With a fortune, MISS MOLLY TREFUSIS."

Thereupon . . But no farther the student may pry:
Love's temple is dark as Eleusis;
So here, at the threshold, we part, you and I,
From "dear little Molly Trefusis."

AT THE CONVENT GATE.

WISTARIA blossoms trail and fall
Above the length of barrier wall;
And softly, now and then,
The shy, staid-breasted doves will flit
From roof to gateway-top, and sit
And watch the ways of men.

The gate's ajar. If one might peep!
Ah, what a haunt of rest and sleep
The shadowy garden seems!
And note how dimly to and fro
The grave, gray-hooded Sisters go,
Like figures seen in dreams.

Look, there is one that tells her beads;
And yonder one apart that reads
A tiny missal's page;
And see, beside the well, the two
That, kneeling, strive to lure anew
The magpie to its cage!

Not beautiful—not all ! But each
With that mild grace, outlying speech,
Which comes of even mood ;—
The Veil unseen that women wear
With heart-whole thought, and quiet care,
And hope of higher good.

"A placid life—a peaceful life !
What need to these the name of Wife ?
What gentler task (I said)—
What worthier—e'en your arts among—
Than tend the sick, and teach the young,
And give the hungry bread ? "

"No worthier task ! " re-echoes She,
Who (closelier clinging) turns with me
To face the road again :
—And yet, in that warm heart of hers,
She means the doves', for she prefers
To " watch the ways of men."

THE MILKMAID.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE.

ACROSS the grass I see her pass;
She comes with tripping pace,—
A maid I know,—and March winds blow
Her hair across her face;—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

The March winds blow. I watch her go:
Her eye is brown and clear;
Her cheek is brown, and soft as down,
(To those who see it near!)—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

What has she not that those have got,—
The dames that walk in silk!

If she undo her 'kerchief blue,
Her neck is white as milk.
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Let those who will be proud and chill !
For me, from June to June,
My Dolly's words are sweet as curds—
Her laugh is like a tune ;—
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Break, break to hear, O crocus-spear !
O tall Lent-lilies flame !
There'll be a bride at Easter-tide,
And Dolly is her name.
With a hey, Dolly ! ho, Dolly !
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

AN OLD FISH POND.

GREEN growths of mosses drop and bead
Around the granite brink;
And 'twixt the isles of water-weed
The wood-birds dip and drink.

Slow efts about the edges sleep;
Swift-darting water-flies
Shoot on the surface; down the deep
Fast-following bubbles rise.

Look down. What groves that scarcely sway!
What "wood obscure," profound!
What jungle!—where some beast of prey
Might choose his vantage-ground!

* * * * *

Who knows what lurks beneath the tide?—
Who knows what tale? Belike,
Those "antres vast" and shadows hide
Some patriarchal Pike;—

Some tough old tyrant, wrinkle-jawed,
To whom the sky, the earth,

Have but for aim to look on awed
And see him wax in girth ;—

Hard ruler there by right of might ;
An ageless Autocrat,
Whose " good old rule " is " Appetite,
And subjects fresh and fat ; "—

While they—poor souls !—in wan despair
Still watch for signs in him ;
And dying, hand from heir to heir
The day undawned and dim,

When the pond's terror too must go ;
Or creeping in by stealth,
Some bolder brood, with common blow,
Shall found a Commonwealth.

* * * * *

Or say,—perchance the liker this !—
That these themselves are gone ;
That Amurath *in minimis*,—
Still hungry,—lingers on,

With dwindling trunk and wolfish jaw
Revolving sullen things,
But most the blind unequal law
That rules the food of Kings ;—

The blot that makes the cosmic All
A mere time-honoured cheat;—
That bids the Great to eat the Small,
Yet lack the Small to eat!

* * * * *

Who knows! Meanwhile the mosses bead
Around the granite brink;
And 'twixt the isles of water-weed
The wood-birds dip and drink.

AN EASTERN APOLOGUE.

(TO E. H. P.)

MELIK the Sultán, tired and wan,
Nodded at noon on his diván.

Beside the fountain lingered near
JAMÍL the bard, and the vizier—

Old YÚSUF, sour and hard to please;
Then JAMÍL sang, in words like these.

Slim is Butheina—slim is she
As boughs of the Aráka tree!

"Nay," quoth the other, teeth between,
"Lean, if you will,—I call her lean."

Sweet is Butheina—sweet as wine,
With smiles that like red bubbles shine!

"True,—by the Prophet!" YÚSUF said.
"She makes men wander in the head!"

Dear is Butheina—ah! more dear
Than all the maidens of Kashmeer!

"Dear," came the answer, quick as thought,
"Dear . . and yet always to be bought."

So JAMÍL ceased. But still Life's page
Shows diverse unto YOUTH and AGE:

And,—be the song of Ghouls or Gods,—
TIME, like the Sultán, sits . . and nods.

TO A MISSAL OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

MISSAL of the Gothic age,
Missal with the blazoned page,
Whence, O Missal, hither come,
From what dim scriptorium?

Whose the name that wrought thee thus,
Ambrose or Theophilus,
Bending, through the waning light,
O'er thy vellum scraped and white;

Weaving 'twixt thy rubric lines
Sprays and leaves and quaint designs;
Setting round thy border scrolled
Buds of purple and of gold?

Ah!—a wondering brotherhood,
Doubtless, round that artist stood,
Strewing o'er his careful ways
Little choruses of praise;

Glad when his deft hand would paint
Strife of Sathanas and Saint,

Or in secret coign entwist
Jest of cloister humourist.

Well the worker earned his wage
Bending o'er the blazoned page!
Tired the hand and tired the wit
Ere the final *Explicit!*

Not as ours the books of old—
Things that steam can stamp and fold;
Not as ours the books of yore—
Rows of type, and nothing more.

Then a book was still a Book,
Where a wistful man might look,
Finding something through the whole,
Beating—like a human soul.

In that growth of day by day,
When to labour was to pray,
Surely something vital passed
To the patient page at last;

Something that one still perceives
Vaguely present in the leaves;
Something from the worker lent;
Something mute—but eloquent!

A REVOLUTIONARY RELIC.

OLD it is, and worn and battered,
As I lift it from the stall;
And the leaves are frayed and tattered,
And the pendent sides are shattered,
Pierced and blackened by a ball.

'Tis the tale of grief and gladness
Told by sad St. Pierre of yore,
That in front of France's madness
Hangs a strange seductive sadness,
Grown pathetic evermore.

And a perfume round it hovers,
Which the pages half reveal,
For a folded corner covers,
Interlaced, two names of lovers,—
A "Savignac" and "Lucile.

As I read I marvel whether,
In some pleasant old château,
Once they read this book together,
In the scented summer weather,
With the shining Loire below?

Nooked—secluded from espial,
  Did Love slip and snare them so,
While the hours danced round the dial
To the sound of flute and viol,
  In that pleasant old château?

Did it happen that no single
  Word of mouth could either speak?
Did the brown and gold hair mingle,
Did the shamed skin thrill and tingle
  To the shock of cheek and cheek?

Did they feel with that first flushing
  Some new sudden power to feel,
Some new inner spring set gushing
At the names together rushing
  Of "Savignac" and "Lucile"?

Did he drop on knee before her—
  "*Son Amour, son Cœur, sa Reine*"—
In his high-flown way adore her,
Urgent, eloquent implore her,
  Plead his pleasure and his pain?

Did she turn with sight swift-dimming,
  And the quivering lip we know,
With the full, slow eyelid brimming,

With the languorous pupil swimming,
Like the love of Mirabeau?

Stretch her hand from cloudy frilling,
For his eager lips to press;
In a flash all fate fulfilling
Did he catch her, trembling, thrilling—
Crushing life to one caress?

Did they sit in that dim sweetness
Of attained love's after-calm,
Marking not the world—its meetness,
Marking Time not, nor his fleetness,
Only happy, palm to palm?

Till at last she,—sunlight smiting
Red on wrist and cheek and hair,—
Sought the page where love first lighting,
Fixed their fate, and, in this writing,
Fixed the record of it there.

* * * * *

Did they marry midst the smother,
Shame and slaughter of it all?
Did she wander like that other
Woful, wistful, wife and mother,
Round and round his prison wall;—

Wander wailing, as the plover
  Waileth, wheeleth, desolate,
Heedless of the hawk above her,
While as yet the rushes cover,
  Waning fast, her wounded mate;—

Wander, till his love's eyes met hers,
  Fixed and wide in their despair?
Did he burst his prison fetters,
Did he write sweet, yearning letters,
  "*A Lucile,—en Angleterre*"?

Letters where the reader, reading,
  Halts him with a sudden stop,
For he feels a man's heart bleeding,
Draining out its pain's exceeding—
  Half a life, at every drop:

Letters where Love's iteration
  Seems to warble and to rave;
Letters where the pent sensation
Leaps to lyric exultation,
  Like a song-bird from a grave.

Where, through Passion's wild repeating,
  Peep the Pagan and the Gaul,
Politics and love competing,

Abelard and Cato greeting,
Rousseau ramping over all.

Yet your critic's right—you waive it,
Whirled along the fever-flood;
And its touch of truth shall save it,
And its tender rain shall lave it,
For at least you read *Amavit*,
Written there in tears of blood.

* * * *

Did they hunt him to his hiding,
Tracking traces in the snow?
Did they tempt him out, confiding,
Shoot him ruthless down, deriding,
By the ruined old château?

Left to lie, with thin lips resting
Frozen to a smile of scorn,
Just the bitter thought's suggesting,
At this excellent new jesting
Of the rabble Devil-born.

Till some "tiger-monkey," finding
These few words the covers bear,
Some swift rush of pity blinding,
Sent them in the shot-pierced binding
"*A Lucile, en Angleterre.*"

* * * *

Fancies only! Nought the covers,
Nothing more the leaves reveal,
Yet I love it for its lovers,
For the dream that round it hovers
Of "Savignac" and "Lucile."

A MADRIGAL.

BEFORE me careless lying,
Young Love his ware comes crying;
Full soon the elf untreasures
His pack of pains and pleasures,—
With roguish eye
He bids me buy
From out his pack of treasures.

His wallet's stuffed with blisses,
With true-love-knots and kisses,
With rings and rosy fetters,
And sugared vows and letters;—
He holds them out
With boyish flout,
And bids me try the fetters.

Nay, Child (I cry), I know them;
There's little need to show them!
Too well for new believing
I know their past deceiving,—
I am too old
(I say), and cold,
To-day, for new believing!

But still the wanton presses,
With honey-sweet caresses,
And still, to my undoing,
He wins me, with his wooing,
To buy his ware
With all its care,
Its sorrow and undoing.

THE BOOKWORM.

WE flung the close-kept casement wide ;
The myriad atom-play
Streamed, with the mid-day's glancing tide,
Across him as he lay ;
Only the unused summer gust
Moved the thin hair of Dryasdust.

The notes he writ were barely dry ;
The entering breeze's breath
Fluttered the fruitless casuistry,
Checked at the leaf where Death—
The final commentator—thrust
His cold " Here endeth Dryasdust."

O fool and blind ! The leaf that grew,
The opening bud, the trees,
The face of men, he nowise knew,
Or careless turned from these
To delve, in folios' rust and must,
The tomb he lived in, dry as dust.

He left, for mute Salmasius,
The lore a child may teach,—

For saws of dead Libanius,
  The sound of uttered speech ;
No voice had pierced the sheep-skin crust
That bound the heart of Dryasdust.

And so, with none to close his eyes,
  And none to mourn him dead,
He in his dumb book-Babel lies
  With gray dust garmented.
Let be ; pass on. It is but just—
These were thy gods, O Dryasdust !

Dig we his grave where no birds greet,—
  He loved no song of birds ;
Lay we his bones where no men meet,—
  He loved no spoken words ;
He let his human-nature rust—
Write his *Hic Jacet* in the Dust.

A GARDEN SONG.

HERE, in this sequestered close
Bloom the hyacinth and rose;
Here beside the modest stock
Flaunts the flaring hollyhock;
Here, without a pang, one sees
Ranks, conditions, and degrees.

All the seasons run their race
In this quiet resting place;
Peach, and apricot, and fig
Here will ripen, and grow big;
Here is store and overplus,—
More had not Alcinoüs!

Here, in alleys cool and green,
Far ahead the thrush is seen;
Here along the southern wall
Keeps the bee his festival;
All is quiet else—afar
Sounds of toil and turmoil are.

Here be shadows large and long;
Here be spaces meet for song;

Grant, O garden-god, that I,
Now that none profane is nigh,—
Now that mood and moment please,
Find the fair Pierides!

A CHAPTER OF FROISSART.

(GRANDPAPA LOQUITUR.)

YOU don't know Froissart now, young folks.
This age, I think, prefers recitals
Of high-spiced crime, with "slang" for jokes,
And startling titles;

But, in my time, when still some few
Loved "old Montaigne," and praised Pope's *Homer*
(Nay, thought to style him "poet" too,
Were scarce misnomer),

Sir John was less ignored. Indeed,
I can re-call how Some-one present
(Who spoils her grandson, Frank!) would read,
And find him pleasant;

For,—by this copy,—hangs a Tale.
Long since, in an old house in Surrey,
Where men knew more of "morning ale"
Than "Lindley Murray,"

In a dim-lighted, whip-hung hall,
'Neath Hogarth's "Midnight Conversation,"
It stood; and oft 'twixt spring and fall,
With fond elation,

I turned the brown old leaves. For there
All through one hopeful happy summer,
At such a page (I well knew where),
Some secret comer,

Whom I can picture, 'Trix, like you
(Though scarcely such a colt unbroken),
Would sometimes place for private view
A certain token;—

A rose-leaf meaning "Garden Wall,"
An ivy-leaf for "Orchard corner,"
A thorn to say "Don't come at all,"—
Unwelcome warner!—

Not that, in truth, our friends gainsaid;
But then Romance required dissembling,
(Ann Radcliffe taught us that!) which bred
Some genuine trembling;—

Though, as a rule, all used to end
In such kind confidential parley
As may to you kind Fortune send,
You long-legged Charlie,

When your time comes. How years slip on !
We had our crosses like our betters ;
Fate sometimes looked askance upon
Those floral letters ;

And once, for three long days disdained,
The dust upon the folio settled ;
For some-one, in the right, was pained,
And some-one nettled,

That sure was in the wrong, but spake
Of fixed intent and purpose stony
To serve King George, enlist and make
Minced-meat of "Boney,"

Who yet survived—ten years at least.
And so, when she I mean came hither,
One day that need for letters ceased,
She brought this with her !

Here is the leaf-stained Chapter :—*How*
The English King laid Siege to Calais ;
I think Gran. knows it even now,—
Go ask her, Alice.

"THE JESSAMY BRIDE."

(A PORTRAIT OF MRS. GWYN, NÉE HORNECK.)

"AND you went once with myrtle crowned!"
You once were she, for whom
Poor GOLDSMITH's gentle genius found
That name of jasmine-bloom!

How strange it seems! You whom he loved,
You who were breathing,—vital,—
Not feigned in books,—for us have proved
Naught but a fragrant title;—

A shape too shadowy far to stand
Beside the girl Primroses,—
Beside the dear old Vicar, and
Our more-than-brother, Moses!

We cannot guess your voice, who know
Scamp Tony's view-halloo;
For us e'en thin Beau Tibbs must show
More palpable than you!—

Yet some scant news we have. You came,
When that kind soul had fled;
You begged his hair; you kept his name
Long on your lips, 'tis said;

You lived;—and died. Or when, or how,
Why ask! This age of ours
But marks your grass-grown headstone now
By GOLDSMITH'S jasmine flowers!

A ROMAN "ROUND-ROBIN."

("HIS FRIENDS" TO QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS.)

"*Hæc decies repetita* [non] *placebit.*"—ARS POETICA.

FLACCUS, you write us charming songs :
No bard we know possesses
In such perfection what belongs
To brief and bright addresses ;

No man can say that Life is short
With mien so little fretful ;
No man to Virtue's paths exhort
In phrases less regretful ;

Or touch, with more serene distress,
On Fortune's ways erratic ;
And then delightfully digress
From Alp to Adriatic :

All this is well, no doubt, and tends
Barbarian minds to soften ;
But, Horace—we, we are your friends—
Why tell *us* this so often ?

Why feign to spread a cheerful feast,
And then thrust in our faces
These barren scraps (to say the least
Of Stoic common-places?

Recount, and welcome, your pursuits:
Sing Lydé's lyre and hair;
Sing drums and Berecynthian flutes;
Sing parsley-wreaths; but spare,—

O, spare to sing, what none deny,
That things we love decay;—
That Time and Gold have wings to fly;—
That all must Fate obey!

Or bid us dine—on this day week—
And pour us, if you can,
As soft and sleek as girlish cheek,
Your inmost Cæcuban;—

Of that we fear not overplus;
But your didactic 'tap'—
Forgive us!—grows monotonous;
Nunc vale! Verbum sap.

VERSES TO ORDER.

(FOR A DRAWING BY E. A. ABBEY.)

HOW weary 'twas to wait! The year
Went dragging slowly on;
The red leaf to the running brook
Dropped sadly, and was gone;
December came, and locked in ice
The plashing of the mill;
The white snow filled the orchard up;
But she was waiting still.

Spring stirred and broke. The rooks once more
'Gan cawing in the loft;
The young lambs' new awakened cries
Came trembling from the croft;
The clumps of primrose filled again
The hollows by the way;
The pale wind-flowers blew; but she
Grew paler still than they.

How weary 'twas to wait! With June,
Through all the drowsy street,

Came distant murmurs of the war,
And rumours of the fleet;
The gossips, from the market-stalls,
Cried news of Joe and Tim;
But June shed all her leaves, and still
There came no news of him.

And then, at last, at last, at last,
One blessèd August morn,
Beneath the yellowing autumn elms,
Pang-panging came the horn;
The swift coach paused a creaking-space,
Then flashed away, and passed;
But she stood trembling yet, and dazed:
The news had come—at last!

And thus the artist saw her stand,
While all around her seems
As vague and shadowy as the shapes
That flit from us in dreams;
And naught in all the world is true,
Save those few words which tell
That him she lost is found again—
Is found again—and well!

A LEGACY.

AH, Postumus, we all must go:
This keen North-Easter nips my shoulder;
My strength begins to fail; I know
You find me older;

I've made my Will. Dear, faithful friend—
My Muse's friend and not my purse's!
Who still would hear and still commend
My tedious verses,

How will you live—of these deprived?
I've learned your candid soul. The venal,—
The sordid friend had scarce survived
A test so penal;

But you—Nay, nay, 'tis so. The rest
Are not as you: you hide your merit;
You, more than all, deserve the best
True friends inherit;—

Not gold—that hearts like yours despise;
Not "spacious dirt" (your own expression),

No; but the rarer, dearer prize—
The Life's Confession!

You catch my thought? What! Can't you guess?
You, you alone, admired my Cantos;—
I've left you, P., my whole MS.,
In three portmanteaus!

"LITTLE BLUE-RIBBONS."

"LITTLE Blue-Ribbons!" We call her that
From the ribbons she wears in her favourite hat;
For may not a person be only five,
And yet have the neatest of taste alive?—
As a matter of fact, this one has views
Of the strictest sort as to frocks and shoes;
And we never object to a sash or bow,
When "little Blue-Ribbons" prefers it so.

"Little Blue-Ribbons" has eyes of blue,
And an arch little mouth, when the teeth peep through;
And her primitive look is wise and grave,
With a sense of the weight of the word "behave;"
Though now and again she may condescend
To a radiant smile for a private friend;
But to smile for ever is weak, you know,
And "little Blue-Ribbons" regards it so.

She's a staid little woman! And so as well
Is her ladyship's doll, "Miss Bonnibelle;"
But I think what at present the most takes up
The thoughts of her heart is her last new cup;

For the object thereon,—be it understood,—
Is the "Robin that buried the 'Babes in the Wood'"—
It is not in the least like a robin, though,
But "little Blue-Ribbons" declares it so.

"Little Blue-Ribbons" believes, I think,
That the rain comes down for the birds to drink;
Moreover, she holds, in a cab you'd get
To the spot where the suns of yesterday set;
And I know that she fully expects to meet
With a lion or wolf in Regent Street!
We may smile, and deny as we like—But, no;
For "little Blue-Ribbons" still dreams it so.

Dear "little Blue-Ribbons!" She tells us all
That she never intends to be "great" and "tall";
(For how could she ever contrive to sit
In her "own, own chair," if she grew one bit!)
And, further, she says, she intends to stay
In her "darling home" till she gets "quite gray;"
Alas! we are gray; and we doubt, you know,
But "little Blue-Ribbons" will have it so!

LINES TO A STUPID PICTURE.

"—the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale."
AYLMER'S FIELD.

FIVE geese,—a landscape damp and wild,—
A stunted, not too pretty, child,
Beneath a battered gingham;
Such things, to say the least, require
A Muse of more-than-average Fire
To adequately sing 'em.

And yet—Why should they? Souls of mark
Have sprung from such;—e'en Joan of Arc
Had scarce a grander duty;
Not always ('tis a maxim trite)
From righteous sources comes the right,—
From beautiful the beauty.

Who shall decide where seed is sown?
Maybe some priceless germ was blown
To this unwholesome marish;
(And what must grow will still increase
Though cackled round by half the geese
And ganders in the parish.)

Maybe this homely face may hide
A Staël before whose mannish pride
  Our frailer sex may tremble;
Perchance this audience anserine
May hiss (O fluttering Muse of mine!)—
  May hiss—a future Kemble!

Or say the gingham shadows o'er
An undeveloped Hannah More!—
  A latent Mrs. Trimmer!!
Who shall affirm it?—who deny?—
Since of the truth nor you nor I
  Discern the faintest glimmer?

So then—Caps off, my Masters all;
Reserve your final word,—recall
  Your all-too-hasty strictures;
Caps off, I say, for Wisdom sees
Undreamed-of possibilities
  In most unhopeful pictures.

A FAIRY TALE.

"On court, hélas! après la vérité;
Ah! croyez-moi, l'erreur a son mérite."
VOLTAIRE.

CURLED in a maze of dolls and bricks,
I find Miss Mary, *ætat* six,
Blonde, blue-eyed, frank, capricious,
Absorbed in her first fairy book,
From which she scarce can pause to look,
Because it's "*so* delicious!"

"Such marvels, too. A crystal Boat,
In which they cross a magic Moat,
That's smooth as glass to row on—
A Cat that brings all kinds of things;
And see, the Queen has angel wings—
Then OGRE comes"—and so on.

What trash it is! How sad to find
(Dear Moralist!) the childish mind
So active and so pliant,
Rejecting themes in which you mix
Fond truths and pleasing facts, to fix
On tales of Dwarf and Giant!

In merest prudence men should teach
That cats mellifluous in speech
Are painful contradictions;
That science ranks as monstrous things
Two pairs of upper limbs; so wings—
E'en angels' wings!—are fictions:

That there's no giant now but Steam;
That life, although "an empty dream,"
Is scarce a "land of Fairy."
"Of course I said all this?" Why, no;
I *did* a thing far wiser, though,—
I read the tale with Mary.

TO A CHILD.

(FROM THE "GARLAND OF RACHEL.")

HOW shall I sing you, Child, for whom
So many lyres are strung;
Or how the only tone assume
That fits a Maid so young?

What rocks there are on either hand!
Suppose—'tis on the cards—
You should grow up with quite a grand
Platonic hate for bards!

How shall I then be shamed, undone,
For ah! with what a scorn
Your eyes must greet that luckless One
Who rhymed you, newly born,—

Who o'er your "helpless cradle" bent
His idle verse to turn;
And twanged his tiresome instrument
Above your unconcern!

Nay,—let my words be so discreet,
That, keeping Chance in view,
Whatever after fate you meet
A part may still be true.

Let others wish you mere good looks,—
Your sex is always fair;
Or to be writ in Fortune's books,—
She's rich who has to spare:

I wish you but a heart that's kind,
A head that's sound and clear;
(Yet let the heart be not too blind,
The head not too severe!)

A joy of life, a frank delight;
A not-too-large desire;
And—if you fail to find a Knight—
At least . . a trusty Squire.

HOUSEHOLD ART.

"MINE be a cot," for the hours of play,
Of the kind that is built by Miss GREENAWAY;
Where the walls are low, and the roofs are red,
And the birds are gay in the blue o'erhead;
And the dear little figures, in frocks and frills,
Go roaming about at their own sweet wills,
And play with the pups, and reprove the calves,
And do nought in the world (but Work) by halves,
From "Hunt the Slipper" and "Riddle-me-ree"
To watching the cat in the apple-tree.

O Art of the Household! Men may prate
Of their ways "intense" and Italianate,—
They may soar on their wings of sense, and float
To the *au delà* and the dim remote,—
Till the last sun sink in the last-lit West,
'Tis the Art at the Door that will please the best;
To the end of Time 'twill be still the same,
For the Earth first laughed when the children came!

THE DISTRESSED POET.

A SUGGESTION FROM HOGARTH.

ONE knows the scene so well,—a touch,
A word, brings back again
That room, not garnished overmuch,
In gusty Drury Lane;

The empty safe, the child that cries,
The kittens on the coat,
The good-wife with her patient eyes,
The milkmaid's tuneless throat;

And last, in that mute woe sublime,
The luckless verseman's air:
The "Bysshe," the foolscap and the rhyme,—
The Rhyme . . . that is not there!

Poor Bard! To dream the verse inspired—
With dews Castalian wet—
Is built from cold abstractions squired
By "Bysshe," his epithet!

Ah ! when she comes, the glad-eyed Muse,
No step upon the stair
Betrays the guest that none refuse,—
She takes us unaware ;

And tips with fire our lyric lips,
And sets our hearts a-flame,
And then, like Ariel, off she trips,
And none know how she came.

Only, henceforth, for right or wrong,
By some dull sense grown keen,
Some blank hour blossomed into song,
We feel that she has been.

JOCOSA LYRA.

IN our hearts is the Great One of Avon
Engraven,
And we climb the cold summits once built on
By Milton.

But at times not the air that is rarest
Is fairest,
And we long in the valley to follow
Apollo.

Then we drop from the heights atmospheric
To Herrick,
Or we pour the Greek honey, grown blander,
Of Landor;

Or our cosiest nook in the shade is
Where Praed is,
Or we toss the light bells of the mocker
With Locker.

Oh, the song where not one of the Graces
Tight-laces,—

Where we woo the sweet Muses not starchly,
But archly,—

Where the verse, like a piper a-Maying,
Comes playing,—
And the rhyme is as gay as a dancer
In answer,—

It will last till men weary of pleasure
In measure!
It will last till men weary of laughter . . .
And after!

MY BOOKS.

THEY dwell in the odour of camphor,
They stand in a Sheraton shrine,
They are "warranted early editions,"
These worshipful tomes of mine;—

In their creamiest "Oxford vellum,"
In their redolent "crushed Levant,"
With their delicate watered linings,
They are jewels of price, I grant;—

Blind-tooled and morocco-jointed,
They have Bedford's daintiest dress,
They are graceful, attenuate, polished,
But they gather the dust, no less;—

For the row that I prize is yonder,
Away on the unglazed shelves,
The bulged and the bruised *octavos*,
The dear and the dumpy twelves,—

Montaigne with his sheepskin blistered,
And Howell the worse for wear,

And the worm-drilled Jesuit's Horace,
And the little old cropped Molière,

And the Burton I bought for a florin,
And the Rabelais foxed and flea'd,—
For the others I never have opened,
But those are the books I read.

THE BOOK-PLATE'S PETITION.

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE TEMPLE.

WHILE cynic CHARLES still trimm'd the vane
'Twixt *Querouaille* and *Castlemaine*,
In days that shocked JOHN EVELYN,
My First Possessor fix'd me in.
In days of *Dutchmen* and of frost,
The narrow sea with JAMES I cross'd,
Returning when once more began
The Age of *Saturn* and of ANNE.
I am a part of all the past;
I knew the GEORGES, first and last;
I have been oft where else was none
Save the great wig of ADDISON;
And seen on shelves beneath me grope
The little eager form of POPE.
I lost the Third that own'd me when
French NOAILLES fled at Dettingen;
The year JAMES WOLFE surpris'd Quebec,
The Fourth in hunting broke his neck;
The day that WILLIAM HOGARTH dy'd,
The Fifth one found me in Cheapside.

This was a *Scholar*, one of those
Whose *Greek* is sounder than their *hose;*
He lov'd old Books and nappy ale,
So liv'd at Streatham, next to THRALE.
'Twas there this stain of grease I boast
Was made by Dr. JOHNSON'S toast.
(He did it, as I think, for Spite;
My Master call'd him *Jacobite!*)
And now that I so long to-day
Have rested *post discrimina,*
Safe in the brass-wir'd book-case where
I watch'd the Vicar's whit'ning hair,
Must I these travell'd bones inter
In some *Collector's* sepulchre!
Must I be torn from hence and thrown
With *frontispiece* and *colophon!*
With vagrant *E's*, and *I's*, and *O's*,
The spoil of plunder'd *Folios!*
With scraps and snippets that to ME
Are naught but *kitchen company!*
Nay, rather, FRIEND, this favour grant me:
Tear me at once; *but don't transplant me.*

CHELTENHAM,
Sept. 31, 1792.

PALOMYDES.

HIM best in all the dim Arthuriad,
Of lovers of fair women, him I prize,—
The Pagan Palomydes. Never glad
Was he with sweetness of his lady's eyes,
Nor joy he had.

But, unloved ever, still must love the same,
And riding ever through a lonely world,
Whene'er on adverse shield or crest he came,
Against the danger desperately hurled,
Crying her name.

So I, who strove to You I may not earn,
Methinks, am come unto so high a place,
That though from hence I can but vainly yearn
For that averted favour of your face,
I shall not turn.

No, I am come too high. Whate'er betide,
To find the doubtful thing that fights with me,
Toward the mountain tops I still shall ride,
And cry your name in my extremity,
As Palomyde,

Until the issue come. Will it disclose
No gift of grace, no pity made complete,
After much labour done,—much war with woes?
Will you deny me still in Heaven, my sweet;—
Ah, Death—who knows?

ANDRÉ LE CHAPELAIN.

(*Clerk of Love*, 1170.)

HIS PLAINT TO VENUS OF THE COMING YEARS.

"Plus ne suis ce que j'ay esté
Et ne le sçaurois jamais estre;
Mon beau printemps et mon esté
Ont fait le saut par la fenestre."
CLEMENT MAROT, 1537.

QUEEN VENUS, round whose feet,
To tend thy sacred fire,
With service bitter-sweet
Nor youths nor maidens tire;—
Goddess, whose bounties be
Large as the un-oared sea;—

Mother, whose eldest born
First stirred his stammering tongue,
In the world's youngest morn,
When the first daisies sprung:—
Whose last, when Time shall die,
In the same grave shall lie:—

Hear thou one suppliant more!
Must I, thy Bard, grow old,
Bent, with the temples frore,
Not jocund be nor bold,
To tune for folk in May
Ballad and virelay?

Shall the youths jeer and jape,
"Behold his verse doth dote,—
Leave thou Love's lute to scrape,
And tune thy wrinkled throat
To songs of 'Flesh in Grass,'"—
Shall they cry thus and pass?

And the sweet girls go by?
"Beshrew the grey-beard's tune!—
What ails his minstrelsy
To sing us snow in June!"
Shall they too laugh, and fleet
Far in the sun-warmed street?

But Thou, whose beauty bright,
Upon thy wooded hill,
With ineffectual light
The wan sun seeketh still;—
Woman, whose tears are dried,
Hardly, for Adon's side,—

Have pity, Erycine!
Withhold not all thy sweets;
Must I thy gifts resign
For Love's mere broken meats;
And suit for alms prefer
That was thine Almoner?

Must I, as bondsman, kneel
That, in full many a cause,
Have scrolled thy just appeal?
Have I not writ thy Laws?
That none from Love shall take
Save but for Love's sweet sake;—

That none shall aught refuse
To Love of Love's fair dues;—
That none dear Love shall scoff
Or deem foul shame thereof;—
That none shall traitor be
To Love's own secrecy;—

Avert,—avert it, Queen!
Debarred thy listed sports,
Let me at least be seen
An usher in thy courts,
Outworn, but still indued
With badge of servitude.

When I no more may go,
  As one who treads on air,
To string-notes soft and slow,
  By maids found sweet and fair—
When I no more may be
Of Love's blithe company ;—

When I no more may sit
  Within thine own pleasance,
To weave, in sentence fit,
  Thy golden dalliance ;
When other hands than these
Record thy soft decrees ;—

Leave me at least to sing
  About thine outer wall,
To tell thy pleasuring,
  Thy mirth, thy festival ;
Yea, let my swan-song be
Thy grace, thy sanctity.

[*Here ended André's words :*
  But One, that writeth, saith—
Betwixt his stricken chords
  He heard the Wheels of Death ;
And knew the fruits Love bare
But Dead-Sea apples were.]

A FANCY FROM FONTENELLE.

"De mémoires de Roses on n'a point vu mourir le Jardinier."

THE Rose in the garden slipped her bud,
And she laughed in the pride of her youthful blood,
As she thought of the Gardener standing by—
"He is old,—so old! And he soon must die!"

The full Rose waxed in the warm June air,
And she spread and spread till her heart lay bare;
And she laughed once more as she heard his tread—
"He is older now! He will soon be dead!"

But the breeze of the morning blew, and found
That the leaves of the blown Rose strewed the ground;
And he came at noon, that Gardener old,
And he raked them softly under the mould.

And I wove the thing to a random rhyme,
For the Rose is Beauty, the Gardener Time.

DON QUIXOTE.

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack!
To make Wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go)
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track:
Alas! poor Knight! Alas! poor soul possest!
Yet would to-day when Courtesy grows chill
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest
Some fire of thine might burn within us still!
Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest,
And charge in earnest—were it but a mill!

THE LOST ELIXIR.

"One drop of ruddy human blood puts more life into the veins of a poem than all the delusive 'aurum potabile' that can be distilled out of the choicest library."—LOWELL.

AH, yes, that "drop of human blood!"—
We had it once, may be,
When our young song's impetuous flood
First poured its ecstasy;
But now the shrunk poetic vein
Yields not that priceless drop again.

We toil,—as toiled we not of old;
Our patient hands distil
The shining spheres of chemic gold
With hard-won, fruitless skill;
But that red drop still seems to be
Beyond our utmost alchemy.

Perchance, but most in later age,
Time's after-gift, a tear,
Will strike a pathos on the page
Beyond all art sincere;
But that "one drop of human blood"
Has gone with life's first leaf and bud.

MEMORIAL VERSES.

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE

*To * * Esq. of * * with a Life of the late Ingenious Mr. Wm. Hogarth.*

DEAR Cosmopolitan,—I know
I should address you a *Rondeau*,
Or else announce what I've to say
At least *en Ballade fratrisée;*
But No: for once I leave Gymnasticks,
And take to simple *Hudibrasticks;*
Why should I choose another Way,
When this was good enough for GAY?

You love, my FRIEND, with me, I think,
That Age of Lustre and of Link;
Of *Chelsea* China and long "s"es,
Of Bag-wigs and of flowered Dresses;
That Age of Folly and of Cards,
Of Hackney Chairs and Hackney Bards;
—No H—LTS, no K—G—N P—LS were then
Dispensing Competence to Men;
The gentle Trade was left to Churls,
Your frowsy TONSONS and your CURLLS;

Mere Wolves in Ambush to attack
The AUTHOR in a Sheep-skin Back;
Then SAVAGE and his Brother-Sinners
In *Porridge-Island* div'd for Dinners;
Or doz'd on *Covent Garden* Bulks,
And liken'd Letters to the Hulks;—
You know that by-gone Time, I say,
That aimless easy-moral'd Day,
When rosy Morn found MADAM still
Wrangling at *Ombre* or *Quadrille*,
When good Sir JOHN reel'd Home to Bed,
From *Pontack's* or the *Shakespear's Head*;
When TRIP *convey'd* his Master's Cloaths,
And took his Titles and his Oaths;
While BETTY, in a cast *Brocade*,
Ogled MY LORD at Masquerade;
When GARRICK play'd the guilty *Richard*,
Or mouth'd *Macbeth* with Mrs. PRITCHARD;
When FOOTE grimac'd his snarling Wit;
When CHURCHILL bullied in the Pit;
When the CUZZONI sang—
But there!
The further Catalogue I spare,
Having no Purpose to eclipse
That tedious Tale of HOMER'S Ships;—
This is the MAN that drew it all
From *Pannier Alley* to the *Mall*,

Then turn'd and drew it once again
From *Bird-Cage-Walk* to *Lewknor's Lane*;—
Its Rakes and Fools, its Rogues and Sots;
Its brawling Quacks, its starveling Scots;
Its Ups and Downs, its Rags and Garters,
Its HENLEYS, LOVATS, MALCOLMS, CHARTRES;
Its Splendour, Squalor, Shame, Disease;
Its *quicquid agunt Homines*;—
Nor yet omitted to pourtray
Furens quid possit Foemina;—
In short, held up to ev'ry Class
NATURE'S unflatt'ring looking-Glass;
And, from his Canvass, spoke to All
The Message of a JUVENAL.

Take Him. His Merits most aver:
His weak Point is—his Chronicler!

NOV^R. 1, 1879.

HENRY FIELDING.

(TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.)

NOT from the ranks of those we call
Philosopher or Admiral,—
Neither as LOCKE was, nor as BLAKE,
Is that Great Genius for whose sake
We keep this Autumn festival.

And yet in one sense, too, was he
A soldier—of humanity;
And, surely, philosophic mind
Belonged to him whose brain designed
That teeming COMIC EPOS where,
As in CERVANTES and MOLIÈRE,
Jostles the medley of Mankind.

Our ENGLISH NOVEL'S pioneer!
His was the eye that first saw clear
How, not in natures half-effaced
By cant of Fashion and of Taste,—
Not in the circles of the Great,
Faint-blooded and exanimate,—

Lay the true field of Jest and Whim,
Which we to-day reap after him.
No :—he stepped lower down and took
The piebald PEOPLE for his Book !

Ah, what a wealth of Life there is
In that large-laughing page of his !
What store and stock of Common-Sense,
Wit, Wisdom, Books, Experience !
How his keen Satire flashes through,
And cuts a sophistry in two !
How his ironic lightning plays
Around a rogue and all his ways !
Ah, how he knots his lash to see
That ancient cloak, Hypocrisy !

Whose are the characters that give
Such round reality ?—that live
With such full pulse ? Fair SOPHY yet
Sings *Bobbing Joan* at the spinet ;
We see AMELIA cooking still
That supper for the recreant WILL ;
We hear Squire WESTERN'S headlong tones
Bawling "Wut ha ?—wut ha ?" to JONES.
Are they not present now to us,—
The Parson with his *Æschylus* ?
SLIPSLOP the frail, and NORTHERTON,

PARTRIDGE, and BATH, and HARRISON?—
Are they not breathing, moving,—all
The motley, merry carnival
That FIELDING kept, in days agone?

He was the first who dared to draw
Mankind the mixture that he saw;
Not wholly good nor ill, but both,
With fine intricacies of growth.
He pulled the wraps of flesh apart,
And showed the working human heart;
He scorned to drape the truthful nude
With smooth, decorous platitude!

He was too frank, may be; and dared
Too boldly. Those whose faults he bared,
Writhed in the ruthless grasp that brought
Into the light their secret thought.
Therefore the TARTUFFE-throng who say
"*Couvrez ce sein*," and look that way,—
Therefore the Priests of Sentiment,
Rose on him with their garments rent.
Therefore the gadfly swarm whose sting
Plies ever round some generous thing,
Buzzed of old bills and tavern-scores,
Old "might-have-beens" and "heretofores";—
Then, from that garbled record-list,
Made him his own Apologist.

And was he? Nay,—let who has known
Nor Youth nor Error, cast the stone!
If to have sense of Joy and Pain
Too keen,—to rise, to fall again,
To live too much,—be sin, why then,
This was no Phœnix among men.
But those who turn that later page,
The Journal of his middle-age,
Watch him serene in either fate,—
Philanthropist and Magistrate;
Watch him as Husband, Father, Friend,
Faithful, and patient to the end;
Grieving, as e'en the brave may grieve,
But for the loved ones he must leave:
These will admit—if any can—
That 'neath the green Estrella trees,
No Artist merely, but a MAN,
Wrought on our noblest island-plan,
Sleeps with the alien Portuguese.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

Nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec cithara carentem.
—Hor. i. 31.

"NOT to be tuneless in old age!"
Ah! surely blest his pilgrimage,
Who, in his Winter's snow,
Still sings with note as sweet and clear
As in the morning of the year
When the first violets blow!

Blest!—but more blest, whom Summer's heat,
Whom Spring's impulsive stir and beat,
Have taught no feverish lure;
Whose Muse, benignant and serene,
Still keeps his Autumn chaplet green
Because his verse is pure!

Lie calm, O white and laureate head!
Lie calm, O Dead, that art not dead,
Since from the voiceless grave,
Thy voice shall speak to old and young
While song yet speaks an English tongue
By Charles' or Thamis' wave!

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON.

"RATHER be dead than praised," he said,
That hero, like a hero dead,
In this slack-sinewed age endued
With more than antique fortitude!

"Rather be dead than praised!" Shall we,
Who loved thee, now that Death sets free
Thine eager soul, with word and line
Profane that empty house of thine?

Nay,—let us hold, be mute. Our pain
Will not be less that we refrain;
And this our silence shall but be
A larger monument to thee.

VICTOR HUGO.

HE set the trumpet to his lips, and lo!
The clash of waves, the roar of winds that blow,
The strife and stress of Nature's warring things,
Rose like a storm-cloud, upon angry wings.

He set the reed-pipe to his lips, and lo!
The wreck of landscape took a rosy glow,
And Life, and Love, and gladness that Love brings
Laughed in the music, like a child that sings.

Master of each, Arch-Master! We that still
Wait in the verge and outskirt of the Hill
Look upward lonely—lonely to the height
Where thou hast climbed, for ever, out of sight!

FABLES OF LITERATURE AND ART.

THE POET AND THE CRITICS.

IF those who wield the Rod forget,
'Tis truly—*Quis custodiet?*

A certain Bard (as Bards will do)
Dressed up his Poems for Review.
His Type was plain, his Title clear;
His Frontispiece by FOURDRINIER.
Moreover, he had on the Back
A sort of sheepskin Zodiac;—
A Mask, a Harp, an Owl,—in fine,
A neat and "classical" Design.
But the *in*-Side?—Well, good or bad,
The Inside was the best he had:
Much Memory,—more Imitation;—
Some Accidents of Inspiration;—
Some Essays in that finer Fashion
Where Fancy takes the place of Passion;—
And some (of course) more roughly wrought
To catch the Advocates of Thought.

In the less-crowded Age of ANNE,
Our Bard had been a favoured Man;

Fortune, more chary with the Sickle,
Had ranked him next to GARTH or TICKELL ;—
He might have even dared to hope
A Line's Malignity from POPE !
But now, when Folks are hard to please,
And Poets are as thick as—Peas,
The Fates are not so prone to flatter,
Unless, indeed, a Friend . . . . No Matter.

The Book, then, had a minor Credit :
The Critics took, and doubtless read it.
Said A.—*These little Songs display*
No lyric Gift ; but still a Ray,—
A Promise. They will do no Harm.
'Twas kindly, if not *very* warm.
Said B.—*The Author may, in time,*
Acquire the Rudiments of Rhyme :
His Efforts now are scarcely Verse.
This, certainly, could not be worse.

Sorely discomfited, our Bard
Worked for another ten Years—hard.
Meanwhile the World, unmoved, went on ;
New Stars shot up, shone out, were gone ;
Before his second Volume came
His Critics had forgot his Name :
And who, forsooth, is bound to know

Each Laureate *in embryo!*
They tried and tested him, no less,—
The pure Assayers of the Press.
Said A.—*The Author, may in Time* . . . .
Or much what B. had said of Rhyme.
Then B.—*These little Songs display* . . . .
And so forth, in the sense of A.
Over the Bard I throw a Veil.

There is no MORAL to this Tale.

THE SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR.

WHEN Fate presents us with the Bays,
We prize the Praiser, not the Praise.
We scarcely think our Fame eternal
If vouched for by the *Farthing Journal;*
But when the *Craftsman's* self has spoken,
We take it for a certain Token.
This an Example best will show,
Derived from DENNIS DIDEROT.

A hackney Author, who'd essayed
All Hazards of the scribbling Trade;
And failed to live by every Mode,
From *Persian Tale* to *Birthday Ode;*
Embarked at last, thro' pure Starvation,
In Theologic Speculation.
'Tis commonly affirmed his Pen
Had been most orthodox till then;
But oft, as SOCRATES has said,
The Stomach's stronger than the Head;
And, for a sudden Change of Creed,
There is no *Jesuit* like Need.
Then, too, 'twas cheap; he took it all,

By force of Habit, from the Gaul.
He showed (the Trick is nowise new)
That Nothing we believe is true;
But chiefly that Mistake is rife
Touching the point of *After-Life;*
Here all were wrong from PLATO down:
His Price (in Boards) was Half-a-Crown.
The Thing created quite a Scare:—
He got a Letter from VOLTAIRE,
Naming him *Ami* and *Confrère;*
Besides two most attractive Offers
Of Chaplaincies from noted Scoffers.
He fell forthwith his Head to lift,
To talk of "I and DR. SW—FT;"
And brag, at Clubs, as one who spoke,
On equal Terms, with BOLINGBROKE.
But, at the last, a Missive came
That put the Copestone to his Fame.
The Boy who brought it would not wait:
It bore a *Covent-Garden* Date;—
A woful Sheet with doubtful Ink,
And Air of *Bridewell* or the *Clink.*
It ran in this wise:—*Learned Sir!*
We, whose Subscriptions follow here,
Desire to state our Fellow-feeling
In this Religion you're revealing.
You make it plain that if so be

We 'scape on Earth from Tyburn Tree,
There's nothing left for us to fear
In this—or any other Sphere.
We offer you our Thanks; and hope
Your Honor, too, may cheat the Rope!
With that came all the Names beneath,
As Blueskin, Jerry Clinch, Macheath,
Bet Careless, and the Rest—a Score
Of Rogues and *Bona Robas* more.

This *Newgate Calendar* he read:
'Tis not recorded what he said.

THE DILETTANT.

THE most oppressive Form of Cant
Is that of your Art-Dilettant :—
Or rather "was." The Race, I own,
To-day is, happily, unknown.

A Painter, now by Fame forgot,
Had painted—'tis no matter what ;
Enough that he resolved to try
The Verdict of a critic Eye.
The Friend he sought made no Pretence
To more than candid Common-sense,
Nor held himself from Fault exempt.
He praised, it seems, the whole Attempt.
Then, pausing long, showed here and there
That Parts required a nicer Care,—
A closer Thought. The Artist heard,
Expostulated, chafed, demurred.

Just then popped in a passing Beau,
Half Pertness, half Pulvilio ;—
One of those Mushroom Growths that spring
From *Grand Tours* and from Tailoring ;—
And dealing much in terms of Art

Picked up at Sale and auction Mart.
Straight to the Masterpiece he ran
With lifted Glass, and thus began,
Mumbling as fast as he could speak :—
"Sublime !—prodigious !—truly Greek !
That 'Air of Head' is just divine ;
That contour GUIDO, every line ;
That Forearm, too, has quite the *Gusto*
Of the third Manner of ROBUSTO . . . ."
Then, with a Simper and a Cough,
He skipped a little farther off :—
"The middle Distance, too, is placed
Quite in the best Italian Taste ;
And Nothing could be more effective
Than the *Ordonnance* and Perspective . . . .
You've sold it?—No?—Then take my word,
I shall speak of it to MY LORD.
What !—I insist. Don't stir, I beg.
Adieu !" With that he made a Leg,
Offered on either Side his Box,—
So took his *Virtú* off to COCK'S.

The Critic, with a Shrug, once more
Turned to the Canvas as before.
"Nay,"—said the Painter—"I allow
The Worst that you can tell me now.
'Tis plain my Art must go to School,
To win such Praises—from a FOOL !"

THE TWO PAINTERS.

IN Art some hold Themselves content
If they but compass what they meant;
Others prefer, their Purpose gained,
Still to find Something unattained—
Something whereto they vaguely grope
With no more Aid than that of Hope.
Which are the Wiser? Who shall say!
The prudent Follower of GAY
Declines to speak for either View,
But sets his Fable 'twixt the two.

Once—'twas in good Queen ANNA's Time—
While yet in this benighted Clime,
The GENIUS of the ARTS, (now known
On mouldy Pediments alone,)
Protected all the Men of Mark,
Two Painters met Her in the Park.
Whether She wore the Robe of Air
Portrayed by VERRIO and LAGUERRE;
Or, like BELINDA, trod this Earth,
Equipped with Hoop of monstrous Girth,
And armed at every Point for Slaughter

With Essences and Orange-water,
I know not: but it seems that then,
After some talk of Brush and Pen,—
Some chat of Art both High and Low,
Of VAN's "Goose-Pie" and KNELLER's "*Mot*,"—
The Lady, as a Goddess should,
Bade Them ask of Her what They would.
"Then, Madam, my request," says BRISK,
Giving his *Ramillie* a whisk,
"Is that your Majesty will crown
My humble Efforts with Renown.
Let me, I beg it—Thanks to You—
Be praised for Everything I do,
Whether I paint a Man of Note,
Or only plan a Petticoat."
"Nay," quoth the other, "I confess"
(This One was plainer in his Dress,
And even poorly clad), "for me,
I scorn Your Popularity.
Why should I care to catch at once
The Point of View of every Dunce?
Let me do well, indeed, but find
The Fancy first, the Work behind;
Nor wholly touch the Thing I wanted . . ."
The Goddess both Petitions granted.

Each in his Way, achieved Success;
But One grew Great. And which One? Guess.

THE CLAIMS OF THE MUSE.

TOO oft we hide our Frailties' Blame
Beneath some simple-sounding Name!
So Folks, who in gilt Coaches ride,
Will call Display but *Proper Pride;*
So Spendthrifts, who their Acres lose,
Curse not their Folly but the *Jews;*
So *Madam,* when her Roses faint,
Resorts to . . . . anything but *Paint.*

An honest Uncle, who had plied
His Trade of Mercer in *Cheapside,*
Until his Name on '*Change* was found
Good for some Thirty Thousand Pound,
Was burdened with an Heir inclined
To thoughts of quite a different Kind.
His Nephew dreamed of Naught but Verse
From Morn to Night, and, what was worse,
He quitted all at length to follow
That "sneaking, whey-faced God, APOLLO."
In plainer Words, he ran up Bills
At *Child's,* at *Batson's* and at *Will's;*
Discussed the Claims of rival Bards

At Midnight,—with a Pack of Cards;
Or made excuse for "t'other Bottle"
Over a point in ARISTOTLE.
This could not last, and like his Betters
He found, too soon, the *Cost* of Letters.
Back to his Uncle's House he flew,
Confessing that he'd not a *Sou*.
'Tis true, his Reasons, if sincere,
Were more poetical than clear:
"Alas!" he said, "I name no Names:
The *Muse*, dear Sir, the *Muse* has claims."
His Uncle, who, behind his Till,
Knew less of *Pindus* than *Snow-Hill*,
Looked grave, but thinking (as Men say)
That Youth but once can have its Day,
Equipped anew his *Pride* and *Hope*
To frisk it on *Parnassus* Slope.
In one short Month he sought the Door
More shorn and ragged than before.
This Time he showed but small Contrition,
And gloried in his mean Condition.
"The greatest of our Race," he said,
"Through *Asian* Cities begged his Bread.
The *Muse*—the *Muse* delights to see
Not *Broadcloth* but *Philosophy!*
Who doubts of this her Honour shames,
But (as you know) she has her Claims . . . ."
"Friend," quoth his Uncle then, "I doubt

This scurvy Craft that you're about
Will lead your *philosophic* Feet
Either to *Bedlam* or the *Fleet.*
Still, as I would not have you lack,
Go get some *Broadcloth* to your Back,
And—if it please this precious *Muse*—
'Twere well to purchase decent Shoes.
Though harkye, Sir . . . ." The Youth was gone,
Before the good Man could go on.

And yet ere long again was seen
That Votary of *Hippocrene.*
As along *Cheap* his Way he took,
His Uncle spied him by a Brook,
Not such as *Nymphs Castalian* pour,—
'Twas but the Kennel, nothing more.
His Plight was plain by every Sign
Of Idiot Smile and Stains of Wine.
He strove to rise, and wagged his Head—
"The *Muse,* dear Sir, the *Muse*—" he said.
"*Muse!*" quoth the Other, in a Fury,
"The *Muse* shan't serve you, I assure ye.
She's just some wanton, idle *Jade*
That makes young Fools forget their Trade,—
Who should be whipped, if I'd my Will,
From *Charing Cross* to *Ludgate Hill.*
She's just . . . ." But he began to stutter,
So left SIR GRACELESS in the Gutter.

THE 'SQUIRE AT VAUXHALL.

NOTHING so idle as to waste
This Life disputing upon *Taste;*
And most—let that sad Truth be written—
In this contentious Land of *Britain,*
Where each one holds "It seems to me"
Equivalent to *Q. E. D.,*
And if you dare to doubt his Word
Proclaims you Blockhead and absurd.
And then, too often, the Debate
Is not 'twixt First and Second-rate,
Some narrow Issue, where a Touch
Of more or less can't matter much,
But, and this makes the Case so sad,
Betwixt undoubted Good and Bad.
Nay,—there are some so strangely wrought,—
So warped and twisted in their Thought,—
That, if the Fact be but confest,
They like the baser Thing the best.
Take BOTTOM, who for one, 'tis clear,
Possessed a "reasonable Ear;"
He might have had at his Command
The Symphonies of *Fairy-Land;*

Well, our immortal SHAKESPEAR owns
The Oaf preferred the "Tongs and Bones!"

'Squire HOMESPUN from *Clod-Hall* rode down,
As the Phrase is—"to see the Town;"
(The Town, in those Days, mostly lay
Betwixt the *Tavern* and the *Play.*)
Like all their Worships the J.P.'s,
He put up at the *Hercules;*
Then sallied forth on Shanks his Mare,
Rather than jolt it in a Chair,—
A curst, new-fangled *Little-Ease,*
That knocks your Nose against your Knees.
For the good 'Squire was Country-bred,
And had strange Notions in his Head,
Which made him see in every Cur
The starveling Breed of *Hanover;*
He classed your Kickshaws and *Ragoos*
With Popery and Wooden Shoes;
Railed at all Foreign Tongues as Lingo,
And sighed o'er *Chaos* Wine for Stingo.

Hence, as he wandered to and fro,
Nothing could please him, high or low.
As *Savages* at *Ships of War*
He looked unawed on *Temple-Bar;*

Scarce could conceal his Discontent
With *Fish-Street* and the *Monument;*
And might (except at Feeding-Hour)
Have scorned the Lion in the *Tower*,
But that the Lion's Race was run,
And—for the Moment—there was none.

At length, blind Fate, that drives us all,
Brought him at Even to *Vauxhall*,
What Time the eager Matron jerks
Her slow Spouse to the *Water-Works*,
And the coy Spinster, half-afraid
Consults the *Hermit* in the Shade.
Dazed with the Din and Crowd, the 'Squire
Sank in a Seat before the Choir.
The FAUSTINETTA, fair and showy,
Warbled an Air from *Arsinoë*,
Playing her Bosom and her Eyes
As Swans do when they agonize.
Alas! to some a Mug of Ale
Is better than an *Orphic Tale!*
The 'Squire grew dull, the 'Squire grew bored;
His Chin dropt down; he slept; he snored.
Then, straying thro' the "poppied Reign,"
He dreamed him at *Clod-Hall* again;
He heard once more the well-known Sounds,
The Crack of Whip, the Cry of Hounds.

He rubbed his Eyes, woke up, and lo!
A Change had come upon the Show.
Where late the Singer stood, a Fellow,
Clad in a Jockey's Coat of Yellow,
Was mimicking a Cock that crew.
Then came the Cry of Hounds anew,
Yoicks! Stole Away! and harking back;
Then Ringwood leading up the Pack.
The 'Squire in Transport slapped his Knee
At this most hugeous Pleasantry.
The sawn Wood followed; last of all
The Man brought something in a Shawl,—
Something that struggled, scraped, and squeaked
As Porkers do, whose tails are tweaked.
Our honest 'Squire could scarcely sit
So excellent he thought the Wit.
But when *Sir Wag* drew off the Sheath
And showed there was no Pig beneath,
His pent-up Wonder, Pleasure, Awe,
Exploded in a long Guffaw:
And, to his dying Day, he'd swear
That Naught in Town the Bell could bear
From "Jockey wi' the Yellow Coat
That had a Farm-Yard in his Throat!"

MORAL THE FIRST you may discover:
The 'Squire was like *Titania's* lover;

He put a squeaking Pig before
The Harmony of CLAYTON'S Score.

MORAL THE SECOND—not so clear;
But still it shall be added here:
He praised the Thing he understood;
'Twere well if every Critic would.

TALES IN RHYME.

THE VIRGIN WITH THE BELLS.

MUCH strange is true. And yet so much
Dan Time thereto of doubtful lays,
He blurs them both beneath his touch :—

In this our tale his part he plays.
At Florence, so the legend tells,
There stood a church that men would praise

(Even where art the most excels)
For works of price ; but chief for one
They called the " Virgin with the Bells.

Gracious she was, and featly done,
With crown of gold about the hair,
And robe of blue with stars thereon,

And sceptre in her hand did bear ;
And o'er her, in an almond tree,
Three little golden bells there were,

Writ with Faith, Hope, and Charity.
None knew from whence she came of old,
Nor whose the sculptor's name should be

Of great or small. But this they told :—
That once from out the blaze of square,
And bickering folk that bought and sold,

More moved no doubt of heat than prayer,
Came to the church an Umbrian,
Lord of much gold and champaign fair,

But, for all this, a hard, haught man.
To whom the priests, in humbleness,
At once to beg for alms began,

Praying him grant of his excess
Such as for poor men's bread might pay,
Or give their saint a gala-dress.

Thereat with scorn he answered—"Nay,
Most Reverend! Far too well ye know,
By guile and wile, the fox's way,

"To swell the Church's overflow.
But ere from me the least carline
Ye win, this summer sky shall snow;

"Or, likelier still, your doll's-eyed queen
Shall ring her bells . . . . but not of craft.
By Bacchus! Ye are none too lean

"For fasting folk!" With that he laughed,
And so, across the porphyry floor,
His hand upon his dagger-haft,

Strode, and of these was seen no more.
Nor, of a truth, much marvelled they
At those his words, since gear and store

Oft dower shrunk souls. But, on a day,
While yet again throughout the square,
The buyers in their noisy way,

Chaffered around the basket ware,
It chanced (I but the tale reveal,
Nor true nor false therein declare)

It chanced that when the priest would kneel
Before the taper's flickering flame
Sudden a little tremulous peal

From out the Virgin's altar came.
And they that heard must fain recall
The Umbrian, and the words of shame

Spoke in his pride, and therewithal
Came news how, at that very date
And hour of time, was fixed his fall,

Who, of the Duke, was banned the State,
And all his goods, and lands as well,
To Holy Church were confiscate.

Such is the tale the Frati tell.

A TALE OF POLYPHEME.

"THERE'S nothing new"—Not that I go so far
As he who also said "There's nothing true,"
Since, on the contrary, I hold there are
Surviving still a verity or two;-
But, as to novelty, in my conviction,
There's nothing new,—especially in fiction.

Hence, at the outset, I make no apology,
If this *my* story is as old as Time,
Being, indeed, that idyll of mythology,—
The Cyclops' love,—which, somewhat varied, I'm
To tell once more, the adverse Muse permitting,
In easy rhyme, and phrases neatly fitting.

"Once on a time"—there's nothing new, I said—
It may be fifty years ago or more,
Beside a lonely posting-road that led
Seaward from Town, there used to stand of yore,
With low-built bar and old bow-window shady
An ancient Inn, the "Dragon and the Lady."

Say that by chance, wayfaring Reader mine,
You cast a shoe, and at this dusty Dragon,
Where beast and man were equal on the sign,
Inquired at once for Blacksmith and for flagon :
The landlord showed you, while you drank your hops,
A road-side break beyond the straggling shops.

And so directed, thereupon you led
Your halting roadster to a kind of pass,
This you descended with a crumbling tread,
And found the sea beneath you like a glass ;
And soon, beside a building partly walled—
Half hut, half cave—you raised your voice and called.

Then a dog growled ; and straightway there began
Tumult within—for, bleating with affright,
A goat burst out, escaping from the can ;
And, following close, rose slowly into sight—
Blind of one eye, and black with toil and tan—
An uncouth, limping, heavy-shouldered man.

Part smith, part seaman, and part shepherd too :
You scarce knew which, as, pausing with the pail
Half filled with goat's milk, silently he drew
An anvil forth, and reaching shoe and nail,
Bared a red forearm, bringing into view
Anchors and hearts in shadowy tattoo.

And then he lit his fire . . . . But I dispense
Henceforth with you, my Reader, and your horse,
As being but a colorable pretence
To bring an awkward hero in perforce ;
Since this our smith, for reasons never known,
To most society preferred his own.

Women declared that he'd an "Evil Eye,"—
This in a sense was true—he had but one ;
Men, on the other hand, alleged him shy :
We sometimes say so of the friends we shun ;
But, wrong or right, suffices to affirm it—
The Cyclops lived a veritable hermit,—

Dwelling below the cliff, beside the sea,
Caved like an ancient British Troglodyte,
Milking his goat at eve, and it may be,
Spearing the fish along the flats at night,
Until, at last, one April evening mild,
Came to the Inn a Lady and a Child.

The Lady was a nullity ; the Child
One of those bright bewitching little creatures,
Who, if she once but shyly looked and smiled,
Would soften out the ruggedest of features ;
Fragile and slight,—a very fay for size,—
With pale town-cheeks, and "clear germander eyes."

Nurses, no doubt, might name her "somewhat wild;"
And pedants, possibly, pronounce her "slow;"
Or corset-makers add, that for a child,
She needed "cultivation;"—all I know
Is that whene'er she spoke, or laughed, or romped, you
Felt in each act the beauty of impromptu.

The Lady was a nullity—a pale,
Nerveless and pulseless quasi-invalid,
Who, lest the ozone should in aught avail,
Remained religiously indoors to read;
So that, in wandering at her will, the Child
Did, in reality, run "somewhat wild."

At first but peering at the sanded floor
And great shark jaw-bone in the cosy bar;
Then watching idly from the dusky door,
The noisy advent of a coach or car;
Then stealing out to wonder at the fate
Of blistered Ajax by the garden gate,—

Some old ship's figure-head—until at last,
Straying with each excursion more and more,
She reached the limits of the road, and passed,
Plucking the pansies, downward to the shore,
And so, as you, respected Reader, showed,
Came to the smith's "desirable abode."

There by the cave the occupant she found,
Weaving a crate; and, with a gladsome cry,
The dog frisked out, although the Cyclops frowned
With all the terrors of his single eye;
Then from a mound came running, too, the goat,
Uttering her plaintive, desultory note.

The Child stood wondering at the silent man,
Doubtful to go or stay, when presently
She felt a plucking, for the goat began
To crop the trail of twining briony
She held behind her; so that, laughing, she
Turned her light steps, retreating, to the sea.

But the goat followed her on eager feet,
And therewithal an air so grave and mild,
Coupled with such a deprecatory bleat
Of injured confidence, that soon the Child
Filled the lone shore with louder merriment,
And e'en the Cyclops' heavy brow unbent.

Thus grew acquaintanceship between the pair,
The girl and goat;—for thenceforth, day by day,
The Child would bring her four-foot friend such fare
As might be gathered on the downward way:—
Foxglove, or broom, and "yellow cytisus,"
Dear to all goats since Greek Theocritus.

But, for the Cyclops, that misogynist
Having, by stress of circumstances, smiled,
Felt it at least incumbent to resist
Further encroachment, and as one beguiled
By adverse fortune, with the half-door shut,
Dwelt in the dim seclusion of his hut.

And yet not less from thence he still must see
That daily coming, and must hear the goat
Bleating her welcome; then, towards the sea,
The happy voices of the playmates float;
Until, at last, enduring it no more,
He took his wonted station by the door.

Here was, of course, a pitiful surrender;
For soon the Child, on whom the Evil Eye
Seemed to exert an influence but slender,
Would run to question him, till, by and by,
His moody humor like a cloud dispersing,
He found himself uneasily conversing.

That was a sow's-ear, that an egg of skate,
And this an agate rounded by the wave.
Then came inquiries still more intimate
About himself, the anvil, and the cave;
And then, at last, the Child, without alarm
Would even spell the letters on his arm.

"G—A—L—*Galatea.*" So there grew
On his part, like some half-remembered tale,
The new-found memory of an ice-bound crew,
And vague garrulities of spouting whale,—
Of sea-cow basking upon berg and floe,
And Polar light, and stunted Eskimo.

Till, in his heart, which hitherto had been
Locked as those frozen barriers of the North,
There came once more the season of the green,—
The tender bud-time and the putting forth,
So that the man, before the new sensation,
Felt for the child a kind of adoration;—

Rising by night, to search for shell and flower,
To lay in places where she found them first;
Hoarding his cherished goat's milk for the hour
When those young lips might feel the summer's thirst;
Holding himself for all devotion paid
By that clear laughter of the little maid.

Dwelling, alas! in that fond Paradise
Where no to-morrow quivers in suspense,—
Where scarce the changes of the sky suffice
To break the soft forgetfulness of sense,—
Where dreams become realities; and where
I willingly would leave him—did I dare.

Yet for a little space it still endured,
Until, upon a day when least of all
The softened Cyclops, by his hopes assured,
Dreamed the inevitable blow could fall,
Came the stern moment that should all destroy,
Bringing a pert young cockerel of a Boy.

Middy, I think,—he'd "*Acis*" on his box:—
A black-eyed, sun-burnt, mischief-making imp,
Pet of the mess,—a Puck with curling locks,
Who straightway travestied the Cyclops' limp,
And marveled how his cousin so could care
For such a "one-eyed, melancholy Bear."

Thus there was war at once; not overt yet,
For still the Child, unwilling, would not break
The new acquaintanceship, nor quite forget
The pleasant past; while, for his treasure's sake,
The boding smith with clumsy efforts tried
To win the laughing scorner to his side.

There are some sights pathetic; none I know
More sad than this: to watch a slow-wrought mind
Humbling itself, for love, to come and go
Before some petty tyrant of its kind;
Saddest, ah!—saddest far,—when it can do
Naught to advance the end it has in view.

This was at least the Cyclops' case, until,
Whether the boy beguiled the Child away,
Or whether that limp Matron on the Hill
Woke from her novel-reading trance, one day
He waited long and wearily in vain,—
But, from that hour, they never came again.

Yet still he waited, hoping—wondering if
They still might come, or dreaming that he heard
The sound of far-off voices on the cliff,
Or starting strangely when the she-goat stirred;
But nothing broke the silence of the shore,
And, from that hour, the Child returned no more.

Therefore our Cyclops sorrowed,—not as one
Who can command the gamut of despair;
But as a man who feels his days are done,
So dead they seem,—so desolately bare;
For, though he'd lived a hermit, 'twas but only
Now he discovered that his life was lonely.

The very sea seemed altered, and the shore;
The very voices of the air were dumb;
Time was an emptiness that o'er and o'er
Ticked with the dull pulsation "Will she come?"
So that he sat "consuming in a dream,"
Much like his old forerunner, Polypheme.

Until there came the question, "Is she gone?"
With such sad sick persistence that at last,
Urged by the hungry thought which drove him on,
Along the steep declivity he passed,
And by the summit panting stood, and still,
Just as the horn was sounding on the hill.

Then, in a dream, beside the "Dragon" door,
The smith saw travellers standing in the sun;
Then came the horn again, and three or four
Looked idly at him from the roof, but One,—
A Child within,—suffused with sudden shame,
Thrust forth a hand, and called to him by name.

Thus the coach vanished from his sight, but he
Limped back with bitter pleasure in his pain;
He was not all forgotten—could it be?
And yet the knowledge made the memory vain;
And then—he felt a pressure in his throat,
So, for that night, forgot to milk his goat.

What then might come of silent misery,
What new resolvings then might intervene,
I know not. Only, with the morning sky,
The goat stood tethered on the "Dragon" green,
And those who, wondering, questioned thereupon,
Found the hut empty,—for the man was gone.

A STORY FROM A DICTIONARY.

"Sic visum Veneri: cui placet impares
Formas atque animos sub juga aënea
Saevo mittere cum joco."

—Hor. i. 33.

"LOVE mocks us all"—as Horace said of old:
From sheer perversity, that arch-offender
Still yokes unequally the hot and cold,
The short and tall, the hardened and the tender;
He bids a Socrates espouse a scold,
And makes a Hercules forget his gender:—
Sic visum Veneri! Lest samples fail,
I add a fresh one from the page of Bayle.

It was in Athens that the thing occurred,
In the last days of Alexander's rule,
While yet in Grove or Portico was heard
The studious murmur of its learned school;—
Nay, 'tis one favored of Minerva's bird
Who plays therein the hero (or the fool)
With a Megarian, who must then have been
A maid, and beautiful, and just eighteen.

I shan't describe her. Beauty is the same
In Anno Domini as erst B.C.;
The type is still that witching One who came,
Between the furrows, from the bitter sea;
'Tis but to shift accessories and frame,
And this our heroine in a trice would be,
Save that she wore a *peplum* and a *chiton*,
Like any modern on the beach at Brighton.

Stay, I forget! Of course the sequel shows
She had some qualities of disposition,
To which, in general, her sex are foes,—
As strange proclivities to erudition,
And lore unfeminine, reserved for those
Who now-a-days descant on "Woman's Mission,"
Or tread instead that "primrose path" to knowledge,
That milder Academe—the Girton College.

The truth is, she admired . . . . a learned man.
There were no curates in that sunny Greece,
For whom the mind emotional could plan
Fine-art habiliments in gold and fleece;
(This was ere chasuble or cope began
To shake the centres of domestic peace;)
So that "admiring," such as maids give way to,
Turned to the ranks of Zeno and of Plato.

The "object" here was mildly prepossessing,
  At least, regarded in a woman's sense;
His *forte*, it seems, lay chiefly in expressing
  Disputed fact in Attic eloquence;
His ways were primitive; and as to dressing,
  His toilet was a negative pretence;
He kept, besides, the *régime* of the Stoic;—
In short, was not, by any means, "heroic."

Sic visum Veneri!—The thing is clear.
  Her friends were furious, her lovers nettled;
'Twas much as though the Lady Vere de Vere
  On some hedge-schoolmaster her heart had settled.
Unheard! Intolerable!—a lumbering steer
  To plod the upland with a mare high-mettled!—
They would, no doubt, with far more pleasure hand her
To curled Euphorion or Anaximander.

And so they used due discipline, of course,
  To lead to reason this most erring daughter,
Proceeding even to extremes of force,—
  Confinement (solitary), and bread and water;
Then, having lectured her till they were hoarse,
  Finding that this to no submission brought her,
At last, (unwisely[1]) to the man they sent,
That he might combat her by argument.

[1] "Unwisely," surely. But 'tis well to mention
That this particular is *not* invention.

Being, they fancied, but a bloodless thing;
Or else too well forewarned of that commotion
Which poets feign inseparable from Spring
To suffer danger from a school-girl notion;
Also they hoped that she might find her king,
On close inspection, clumsy and Bœotian:—
This was acute enough, and yet, between us,
I think they thought too little about Venus.

Something, I know, of this sort is related
In Garrick's life. However, the man came,
And taking first his mission's end as stated,
Began at once her sentiments to tame,
Working discreetly to the point debated
By steps rhetorical I spare to name;
In other words,—he broke the matter gently.
Meanwhile, the lady looked at him intently,

Wistfully, sadly,—and it put him out,
Although he went on steadily, but faster.
There were some maladies he'd read about
Which seemed, at first, most difficult to master;
They looked intractable at times, no doubt,
But all they needed was a little plaster;
This was a thing physicians long had pondered,
Considered, weighed . . . . and then . . . . and then
he wandered.

('Tis so embarrassing to have before you
A silent auditor, with candid eyes;
With lips that speak no sentence to restore you,
And aspect, generally, of pained surprise;
Then, if we add that all these things adore you,
'Tis really difficult to syllogise:—
Of course it mattered not to him a feather,
But still he wished . . . . they'd not been left together.)

"Of one," he said, continuing, "of these
The young especially should be suspicious;
Seeing no ailment in Hippocrates
Could be at once so tedious and capricious;
No seeming apple of Hesperides
More fatal, deadlier, and more delicious—
Pernicious,—he should say,—for all its seeming . ."
It seemed to him he simply was blaspheming.

(If she had only turned askance, or uttered
Word in reply, or trifled with her brooch,
Or sighed, or cried, grown petulant, or fluttered,
He might (in metaphor) have "called his coach";
Yet still, while patiently he hemmed and stuttered,
She wore her look of wondering reproach;
(And those who read the "Shakespeare of Romances"
Know of what stuff a girl's "dynamic glance" is.)

"But there was still a cure, the wise insisted,
In Love,—or rather, in Philosophy.
Philosophy—no, Love—at best existed
But as an ill for that to remedy:
There was no knot so intricately twisted,
There was no riddle but at last should be
By Love—he meant Philosophy—resolved . . . ."
The truth is, he was getting quite involved.

O sovran Love! how far thy power surpasses
Aught that is taught of Logic or the Schools!
Here was a man, "far seen" in all the classes,
Strengthened of precept, fortified of rules,
Mute as the least articulate of asses;
Nay, at an age when every passion cools,
Conscious of nothing but a sudden yearning
Stronger by far than any force of learning!

Therefore he changed his tone, flung down his wallet,
Described his lot, how pitiable and poor;
The hut of mud,—the miserable pallet,—
The alms solicited from door to door;
The scanty fare of bitter bread and sallet,—
Could she this shame,—this poverty endure?
I scarcely think he knew what he was doing,
But that last line had quite a touch of wooing.

And so she answered him,—those early Greeks
  Took little care to keep concealment preying
At any length upon their damask cheeks,—
  She answered him by very simply saying,
She could and would :—and said it as one speaks
  Who takes no course without much careful weighing. . . .
Was this, perchance, the answer that he hoped?
It might, or might not be. But they eloped.

Sought the free pine-wood and the larger air,—
  The leafy sanctuaries, remote and inner,
Where the great heart of nature, beating bare,
  Receives benignantly both saint and sinner ;—
Leaving propriety to gasp and stare,
  And shake its head, like Burleigh, after dinner,
From pure incompetence to mar or mend them :
They fled and wed ;—though, mind, I don't defend them.

I don't defend them. 'Twas a serious act,
  No doubt too much determined by the senses ;
(Alas ! when these affinities attract,
  We lose the future in the present tenses !)
Besides, the least establishment's a fact
  Involving nice adjustment of expenses ;
Moreover, too, reflection should reveal
That not remote contingent—*la famille.*

Yet these, maybe, were happy in their lot.
Milton has said (and surely Milton knows)
That after all, philosophy is "not,—
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;"
And some, no doubt, for Love's sake have forgot
Much that is needful in this world of prose:—
Perchance 'twas so with these. But who shall say?
Time has long since swept them and theirs away.

THE WATER-CURE.

A TALE: IN THE MANNER OF PRIOR.

"*—portentaque Thessala rides?*"
—Hor.
"*—Thessalian portents do you flout?*"
* *

CARDENIO'S fortunes ne'er miscarried
Until the day Cardenio married.
What then? the Nymph no doubt was young?
She was: but yet—she had a tongue!
Most women have, you seem to say.
I grant it—in a different way.

'Twas not that organ half-divine,
With which, Dear Friend, your spouse or mine,
What time we seek our nightly pillows,
Rebukes our easy peccadilloes:
'Twas not so tuneful, so composing;
'Twas louder and less often dozing;
At Ombre, Basset, Loo, Quadrille,
You heard it resonant and shrill;
You heard it rising, rising yet
Beyond Selinda's parroquet;

You heard it rival and outdo
The chair-men and the link-boy too;
In short, wherever lungs perform,
Like Marlborough, it rode the storm.

So uncontrolled it came to be,
Cardenio feared his *chère amie*
(Like Echo by Cephissus shore)
Would turn to voice and nothing more.

That ('tis conceded) must be cured
Which can't by practice be endured.
Cardenio, though he loved the maid,
Grew daily more and more afraid;
And since advice could not prevail
(Reproof but seemed to fan the gale,)
A prudent man, he cast about
To find some fitting nostrum out.
What need to say that priceless drug
Had not in any mine been dug?
What need to say no skilful leech
Could check that plethora of speech?
Suffice it, that one lucky day
Cardenio tried—another way.

A Hermit (there were hermits then;
The most accessible of men!)

Near Vauxhall's sacred shade resided ;
In him, at length, our friend confided.
(Simples, for show, he used to sell ;
But cast Nativities as well.)
Consulted, he looked wondrous wise ;
Then undertook the enterprise.

What that might be, the Muse must spare :
To tell the truth, she was not there.
She scorns to patch what she ignores
With Similes and Metaphors ;
And so, in short, to change the scene,
She slips a fortnight in between.

Behold our pair then (quite by chance !)
In Vauxhall's garden of romance,—
That paradise of nymphs and grottoes,
Of fans, and fiddles, and ridottoes !
What wonder if, the lamps reviewed,
The song encored, the maze pursued,
No further feat could seem more pat
Than seek the Hermit after that ?
Who then more keen her fate to see
Than this, the new Leuconoë,
On fire to learn the lore forbidden
In Babylonian numbers hidden ?

Forthwith they took the darkling road
To Albumazar his abode.

Arriving, they beheld the sage
Intent on hieroglyphic page,
In high Armenian cap arrayed
And girt with engines of his trade;
(As Skeletons, and Spheres, and Cubes;
As Amulets and Optic Tubes;)
With dusky depths behind revealing
Strange shapes that dangled from the ceiling;
While more to palsy the beholder
A Black Cat sat upon his shoulder.

The Hermit eyed the Lady o'er
As one whose face he'd seen before;
And then, with agitated looks,
He fell to fumbling at his books.

Cardenio felt his spouse was frightened,
Her grasp upon his arm had tightened;
Judge then her horror and her dread
When "Vox Stellarum" shook his head;
Then darkly spake in phrase forlorn
Of Taurus and of Capricorn;
Of stars averse, and stars ascendant,
And stars entirely independent;

In fact, it seemed that all the Heavens
Were set at sixes and at sevens,
Portending, in her case, some fate
Too fearful to prognosticate.

Meanwhile the Dame was well-nigh dead.
"But is there naught," Cardenio said,
"No sign or token, Sage, to show
From whence, or what, this dismal woe?"

The sage, with circle and with plane,
Betook him to his charts again.
"It vaguely seems to threaten Speech:
No more (he said) the signs can teach."

But still Cardenio tried once more:
"Is there no potion in your store,
No charm by Chaldee mage concerted
By which this doom can be averted?"

The Sage, with motion doubly mystic,
Resumed his juggling cabalistic.
The aspects here again were various;
But seemed to indicate Aquarius.
Thereat portentously he frowned;
Then frowned again, then smiled;—'twas found!

But 'twas too simple to be tried.
"What is it, then?" at once they cried.

"Whene'er by chance you feel incited
To speak at length, or uninvited;
Whene'er you feel your tones grow shrill
(At times, we know, the softest will!),
This word oracular, my daughter,
Bids you to fill your mouth with water:
Further, to hold it firm and fast,
Until the danger be o'erpast."

The Dame, by this in part relieved
The prospect of escape perceived,
Rebelled a little at the diet.
Cardenio said discreetly, "Try it,
Try it, my Own. You have no choice,
What if you lose your charming voice!"
She tried, it seems. And whether then
Some god stepped in, benign to men;
Or Modesty, too long outlawed,
Contrived to aid the pious fraud
I know not:—but from that same day
She talked in quite a different way.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ.

INCOGNITA.

JUST for a space that I met her—
Just for a day in the train!
It began when she feared it would wet her,
That tiniest spurtle of rain;
So we tucked a great rug in the sashes,
And carefully padded the pane;
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
Longing to do it again!

Then it grew when she begged me to reach her
A dressing-case under the seat;
She was "really so tiny a creature,
That she needed a stool for her feet!"
Which was promptly arranged to her order
With a care that was even minute,
And a glimpse—of an open-work border,
And a glance—of the fairyest boot.

Then it drooped, and revived at some hovels—
"Were they houses for men or for pigs?"
Then it shifted to muscular novels,
With a little digression on prigs:

She thought "Wives and Daughters" "*so* jolly;
"Had I read it?" She knew when I had,
Like the rest, I should dote upon "Molly;"
And "poor Mrs. Gaskell—how sad!"

"Like Browning?" "But so-so." His proof lay
Too deep for her frivolous mood,
That preferred your mere metrical *soufflé*
To the stronger poetical food;
Yet at times he was good—"as a tonic:"
Was Tennyson writing just now?
And was this new poet Byronic,
And clever, and naughty, or how?

Then we trifled with concerts and croquêt,
Then she daintily dusted her face;
Then she sprinkled herself with "Ess Bouquet,"
Fished out from the foregoing case;
And we chattered of Gassier and Grisi,
And voted Aunt Sally a bore;
Discussed if the tight rope were easy,
Or Chopin much harder than Spohr.

And oh! the odd things that she quoted,
With the prettiest possible look,
And the price of two buns that she noted
In the prettiest possible book;

While her talk like a musical rillet
Flashed on with the hours that flew,
And the carriage, her smile seemed to fill it
With just enough summer—for Two.

Till at last in her corner, peeping
From a nest of rugs and of furs,
With the white shut eyelids sleeping
On those dangerous looks of hers,
She seemed like a snow-drop breaking,
Not wholly alive nor dead,
But with one blind impulse making
To the sounds of the spring overhead;

And I watched in the lamplight's swerving
The shade of the down-dropt lid,
And the lip-line's delicate curving,
Where a slumbering smile lay hid,
Till I longed that, rather than sever,
The train should shriek into space,
And carry us onward—for ever,—
Me and that beautiful face.

But she suddenly woke in a fidget,
With fears she was "nearly at home,"
And talk of a certain Aunt Bridget,
Whom I mentally wished—well, at Rome;

Got out at the very next station,
Looking back with a merry *Bon Soir*,
Adding, too, to my utter vexation,
A surplus, unkind *Au Revoir*.

So left me to muse on her graces,
To doze and to muse, till I dreamed
That we sailed through the sunniest places
In a glorified galley, it seemed;
But the cabin was made of a carriage,
And the ocean was Eau-de-Cologne,
And we split on a rock labelled MARRIAGE,
And I woke,—as cold as a stone.

And that's how I lost her—a jewel,
Incognita—one in a crowd,
Nor prudent enough to be cruel,
Nor worldly enough to be proud.
It was just a shut lid and its lashes,
Just a few hours in a train,
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes
Longing to see her again.

DORA *VERSUS* ROSE.

"The Case is proceeding."

FROM the tragic-est novels at Mudie's—
At least, on a practical plan—
To the tales of mere Hodges and Judys,
One love is enough for a man.
But no case that I ever yet met is
Like mine: I am equally fond
Of Rose, who a charming brunette is,
And Dora, a blonde.

Each rivals the other in powers—
Each waltzes, each warbles, each paints—
Miss Rose, chiefly tumble-down towers;
Miss Do., perpendicular saints.
In short, to distinguish is folly;
'Twixt the pair I am come to the pass
Of Macheath, between Lucy and Polly,—
Or Buridan's ass.

If it happens that Rosa I've singled
For a soft celebration in rhyme,

Then the ringlets of Dora get mingled
Somehow with the tune and the time;
Or I painfully pen me a sonnet
To an eyebrow intended for Do.'s,
And behold I am writing upon it
The legend, "To Rose."

Or I try to draw Dora (my blotter
Is all overscrawled with her head),
If I fancy at last that I've got her,
It turns to her rival in stead;
Or I find myself placidly adding
To the rapturous tresses of Rose
Miss Dora's bud-mouth, and her madding,
Ineffable nose.

Was there ever so sad a dilemma?
For Rose I would perish (*pro tem.*);
For Dora I'd willingly stem a—
(Whatever might offer to stem);
But to make the invidious election,—
To declare that on either one's side
I've a scruple,—a grain, more affection,
I *cannot* decide.

And, as either so hopelessly nice is,
My sole and my final resource

Is to wait some indefinite crisis,—
  Some feat of molecular force,
To solve me this riddle conducive
  By no means to peace or repose,
Since the issue can scarce be inclusive
    Of Dora *and* Rose.

(*Afterthought.*)

But, perhaps, if a third (say a Norah),
  Not quite so delightful as Rose,—
Not wholly so charming as Dora,—
  Should appear, is it wrong to suppose,—
As the claims of the others are equal,—
  And flight—in the main—is the best,—
That I might . . . But no matter,—the sequel
    Is easily guessed.

AD ROSAM.

"*Mitte sectari* Rosa *quo locorum*
Sera moretur."
—Hor I. 38.

I HAD a vacant dwelling—
Where situated, I,
As naught can serve the telling,
Decline to specify;—
Enough 'twas neither haunted,
Entailed, nor out of date;
I put up "Tenant Wanted,"
And left the rest to Fate.

Then, Rose, you passed the window,—
I see you passing yet,—
Ah, what could I within do,
When, Rose, our glances met!
You snared me, Rose, with ribbons,
Your rose-mouth made me thrall,
Brief—briefer far than Gibbon's,
Was my "Decline and Fall."

I heard the summons spoken
That all hear—king and clown :
You smiled—the ice was broken ;
You stopped—the bill was down.
How blind we are ! It never
Occurred to me to seek
If you had come for ever,
Or only for a week.

The words your voice neglected,
Seemed written in your eyes ;
The thought your heart protected,
Your cheek told, missal-wise ;—
I read the rubric plainly
As any Expert could ;
In short, we dreamed,—insanely,
As only lovers should.

I broke the tall Œnone,
That then my chambers graced,
Because she seemed "too bony,"
To suit your purist taste ;
And you, without vexation,
May certainly confess
Some graceful approbation,
Designed *à mon adresse.*

You liked me then, *carina*,—
  You liked me then, I think ;
For your sake gall had been a
  Mere tonic-cup to drink ;
For your sake, bonds were trivial,
  The rack, a *tour-de-force ;*
And banishment, convivial,—
  Your coming too, of course

Then, Rose, a word in jest meant
  Would throw you in a state
That no well-timed investment
  Could quite alleviate ;
Beyond a Paris trousseau
  You prized my smile, I know,
I, yours—ah, more than Rousseau
  The lip of d'Houdetot.

Then, Rose,—But why pursue it ?
  When Fate begins to frown
Best write the final "*fuit*,"
  And gulp the physic down.
And yet,—and yet, that only,
  The song should end with this :—
You left me,—left me lonely,
  Rosa mutabilis !

Left me, with Time for Mentor,
(A dreary *tête-à-tête!*)
To pen my "Last Lament," or
Extemporize to Fate,
In blankest verse disclosing
My bitterness of mind,—
Which is, I learn, composing
In cases of the kind.

No, Rose. Though you refuse me,
Culture the pang prevents;
"I am not made"—excuse me—
"Of so slight elements;"
I leave to common lovers
The hemlock or the hood;
My rarer soul recovers
In dreams of public good.

The Roses of this nation—
Or so I understand
From careful computation—
Exceed the gross demand;
And, therefore, in civility
To maids that can't be matched,
No man of sensibility
Should linger unattached.

So, without further fashion—
A modern Curtius,
Plunging, from pure compassion,
To aid the overplus,—
I sit down, sad—not daunted,
And, in my weeds, begin
A new card—"Tenant Wanted;
Particulars within."

OUTWARD BOUND.

(HORACE, III. 7.)

"Quid fles, Asterie, quem tibi candidi
Primo restituent vere Favonii—
Gygen?"

COME, Laura, patience. Time and Spring
Your absent Arthur back shall bring,
Enriched with many an Indian thing
Once more to woo you;
Him neither wind nor wave can check,
Who, cramped beneath the "Simla's" deck,
Still constant, though with stiffened neck,
Makes verses to you.

Would it were wave and wind alone!
The terrors of the torrid zone,
The ndiscriminate cyclone,
A man might parry;
But only faith, or "triple brass,"
Can help the "outward-bound" to pass
Safe through that eastward-faring class
Who sail to marry.

For him fond mothers, stout and fair,
Ascend the tortuous cabin stair
Only to hold around his chair
Insidious sessions;
For him the eyes of daughters droop
Across the plate of handed soup,
Suggesting seats upon the poop,
And soft confessions.

Nor are these all his pains, nor most.
Romancing captains cease to boast—
Loud majors leave their whist—to roast
The youthful griffin;
All, all with pleased persistence show
His fate,—"remote, unfriended, slow,"—
His "melancholy" bungalow,—
His lonely tiffin.

In vain. Let doubts assail the weak;
Unmoved and calm as "Adam's Peak,"
Your "blameless Arthur" hears them speak
Of woes that wait him;
Naught can subdue his soul secure;
"Arthur will come again," be sure,
Though matron shrewd and maid mature
Conspire to mate him.

But, Laura, on your side, forbear
To greet with too impressed an air
A certain youth with chestnut hair,—
A youth unstable ;
Albeit none more skilled can guide
The frail canoe on Thamis tide,
Or, trimmer-footed, lighter glide
Through "Guards" or "Mabel."

Be warned in time. Without a trace
Of acquiescence on your face,
Hear, in the waltz's breathing-space,
His airy patter ;
Avoid the confidential nook ;
If, when you sing, you find his look
Grow tender, close your music-book,
And end the matter.

IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

HUGH (*on furlough*). HELEN (*his cousin*).

HELEN.

THEY have not come! And ten is past,—
Unless, by chance, my watch is fast;
—Aunt Mabel surely told us "ten."

HUGH.

I doubt if she can do it, then.
In fact, their train . . . .

HELEN.

That is,—you knew.
How could you be so treacherous, Hugh?

HUGH.

Nay;—it is scarcely mine, the crime,
One can't account for railway-time!
Where shall we sit? Not here, I vote;—
At least, there's nothing here of note.

HELEN.

Then *here* we'll stay, please. Once for all,
I bar all artists,—great and small!
From now until we go in June
I shall hear nothing but this tune:—
Whether I like Long's "Vashti," or
Like Leslie's "Naughty Kitty" more;
With all that critics, right or wrong,
Have said of Leslie and of Long . . . .
No. If you value my esteem,
I beg you'll take another theme;
Paint me some pictures, if you will,
But spare me these, for good and ill . . . .

HUGH.

"Paint you some pictures!" Come, that's kind!
You know I'm nearly colour-blind.

HELEN.

Paint then, in words. You did before;
Scenes at—where was it? Dustypoor?
You know . . . .

HUGH (*with an inspiration*).

I'll try.

HELEN.

But mind they're pretty
Not "hog hunts." . . . .

HUGH.

You shall be Committee,
And say if they are "out" or "in."

HELEN.

I shall reject them all. Begin.

HUGH.

Here is the first. An antique Hall
(Like Chanticlere) with panelled wall.
A boy, or rather lad. A girl,
Laughing with all her rows of pearl
Before a portrait in a ruff.
He meanwhile watches . . . .

HELEN.

That's enough,
It wants "*verve*," "*brio*," "breadth," "design," . . . .
Besides, it's English. I decline.

HUGH.

This is the next. 'Tis finer far:
A foaming torrent (say Braemar).

A pony, grazing by a boulder,
Then the same pair, a little older,
Left by some lucky chance together.
He begs her for a sprig of heather . . . .

HELEN.

—"Which she accords with smile seraphic."
I know it,—it was in the "Graphic."
Declined.

HUGH.

Once more, and I forego
All hopes of hanging, high or low:
Behold the hero of the scene,
In bungalow and palankeen . . . .

HELEN.

What!—all at once! But that's absurd;—
Unless he's Sir Boyle Roche's bird!

HUGH.

Permit me—'Tis a Panorama,
In which the person of the drama,
Mid orientals dusk and tawny,
Mid warriors drinking brandy pawnee,
Mid scorpions, dowagers, and griffins,

In morning rides, at noon-day tiffins,
In every kind of place and weather,
Is solaced . . . . by a sprig of heather.
(*More seriously.*)
He puts that faded scrap before
The "Rajah," or the "Koh-i-noor' . . . .
He would not barter it for all
Benares, or the Taj-Mahal . .
It guides,—directs his every act,
And word, and thought—In short—in fact—
I mean . . . .
(*Opening his locket.*)
Look, Helen, that's the heather!
(Too late! Here come both Aunts together.)

HELEN.

What heather, Sir?
(*After a pause.*)
And why . . . . "too late?"
—Aunt Dora, how you've made us wait!
Don't you agree that it's a pity
Portraits are hung by the Committee?

THE LAST DESPATCH.

HURRAH! the Season's past at last;
At length we've "done" our pleasure.
Dear "Pater," if you *only* knew
How much I've *longed* for home and you,—
Our own green lawn and leisure!

And then the pets! One half forgets
The dear dumb friends—in Babel.
I hope my special fish is fed;—
I long to see poor Nigra's head
Pushed at me from the stable!

I long to see the cob and "Rob,"—
Old Bevis and the Collie;
And *won't* we read in "Traveller's Rest"!
Home readings after all are best;—
None else seem half so "jolly!"

One misses your dear kindly store
Of fancies quaint and funny;
One misses, too, your kind *bon-mot*;—
The Mayfair wit I mostly know
Has more of gall than honey!

How tired one grows of "calls and balls!"
This "*toujours perdrix*" wearies;
I'm longing, quite, for "Notes on Knox";
(*Apropos*, I've the loveliest box
For holding *Notes and Queries!*)

A change of place would suit my case.
You'll take me?—on probation?
As "Lady-help," then, let it be;
I feel (as Lavender shall see),
That Jams are *my* vocation!

How's Lavender? My love to her.
Does Briggs still flirt with Flowers?—
Has Hawthorn stubbed the common clear?—
You'll let me give *some* picnics, Dear,
And ask the Vanes and Towers?

I met Belle Vane. "HE's" still in Spain!
Sir John won't let them marry.
Aunt drove the boys to Brompton Rink;
And Charley,—changing Charley,—think,
Is now *au mieux* with Carry!

And NO. You know what "*No*" I mean—
There's no one yet at present:
The Benedick I have in view

Must be a something wholly new,—
One's father's *far* too pleasant.

So hey, I say, for home and you!
Good-by to Piccadilly;
Balls, beaux, and Bolton-row, adieu!
Expect me, Dear, at half-past two;
Till then,—your Own Fond—MILLY.

"PREMIERS AMOURS."

Old Loves and old dreams,—
"Requiescant in pace."
How strange now it seems,—
"Old" Loves and "old" dreams!
Yet we once wrote you reams
Maude, Alice, and Gracie!
Old Loves and old dreams,—
"Requiescant in pace."

WHEN I called at the "Hollies" to-day,
In the room with the cedar-wood presses,
Aunt Deb. was just folding away
What she calls her "memorial dresses."

She'd the frock that she wore at fifteen,—
Short-waisted, of course—my abhorrence;
She'd "the loveliest"—something in "een"
That she wears in her portrait by Lawrence;

She'd the "jelick" she used—"as a Greek," (!)
She'd the habit she got her bad fall in;
She had e'en the blue *moiré antique*
That she opened Squire Grasshopper's ball in:—

New and old they were all of them there :—
  Sleek velvet and bombazine stately,—
She had hung them each over a chair
  To the "*paniers*" she's taken to lately

(Which she showed me, I think, by mistake).
  And I conned o'er the forms and the fashions,
Till the faded old shapes seemed to wake
  All the ghosts of my passed-away "passions;"—

From the days of love's youthfullest dream,
  When the height of my shooting idea
Was to burn, like a young Polypheme,
  For a somewhat mature Galatea.

There was Lucy, who'd "tiffed" with her first,
  And who threw me as soon as her third came;
There was Norah, whose cut was the worst,
  For she told me to wait till my "berd" came;

Pale Blanche, who subsisted on salts;
  Blonde Bertha, who doted on Schiller;
Poor Amy, who taught me to waltz;
  Plain Ann, that I wooed for the "siller;"—

All danced round my head in a ring,
  Like "The Zephyrs" that somebody painted,

All shapes of the feminine thing—
  Shy, scornful, seductive, and sainted,—

To my Wife, in the days she was young . . .
  "How, Sir," says that lady, disgusted,
"Do you dare to include ME among
  Your loves that have faded and rusted?"

"Not at all!"—I benignly retort.
  (I was just the least bit in a temper!)
"Those, alas! were the fugitive sort,
  But you are my—*eadem semper!*"

Full stop,—and a Sermon. Yet think,—
  There was surely good ground for a quarrel,—
She had checked me when just on the brink
  Of—I feel—a remarkable MORAL.

"POOR MISS TOX."

It was an ancient Shepherdess,
Forlorn amid the flocks;
The tears she shed for loneliness
Would melt the hardest rocks.

IN Dickens 'twas "Princess's Place,"
But here 'tis "Maiden Row,"
And yet 'tis still the self-same face,
The self-same air I know:
'Tis true the name is plainly "Brown,"
'Tis true the flowers are "stocks,"
And yet I'd wager half-a-crown
That you are—"poor Miss Tox!"

There can't, of course, be more than one;
The cases must be rare
Of maidens left to nurse alone
Dyspepsia and Despair;
Ah no; that gown of youthful make,
Those tresses dark as Nox,
Those arching brows,—I can't mistake,
You must be—"poor Miss Tox!"

And then your daily ways :—I know
  Exactly when you dust
The two old candlesticks of Bow
  And good John Wesley's bust ;
Exactly as your tea is spread
  I set my pair of clocks ;
(You take your morning meal in bed,
  I fear—my "poor Miss Tox !")

I see you knit, I see you hem,
  I see you painting flowers,
I see you read "Affection's Gem,"
  Exhaustively,—for hours.
And once—I own 'twas somewhat late—
  I saw you . . . . comb your locks ;
Why was not mine Actæon's fate,
  O Artemis—and Tox ?

But still I look and still I see
  That still the days evoke
No youth of artless modesty
  Impatient for the yoke :
For "men may come, and men may go,"
  But ne'er a suitor knocks
At that green door in "Maiden Row,"
  To ask for—"poor Miss Tox !"

I wish one would,—I do indeed.
Without some careful guide
To curb his playful ways at need,
And o'er his purse preside;
To square his days to rule and plan,
To mend his gloves and socks,
Ah what, alas! were helpless man,
Ah what!—my "poor Miss Tox!"

And there must still be some, one feels,
Whom no such sway controls;
Who tread this vale with undarned heels,
And voids within their souls;
And I can't see why you should fail
To shield from Fortune's shocks
Some ardent—if not youthful—male,—
I can't,—my "poor Miss Tox!"

I think it hard that Fate has laid
Your lot "upon the shelf;"
It cramps one's nature so to fade
In that tight pot of Self;
Who knows but you might bud and bloom
Had Wedlock's wider box
But lent you "verge enough" and "room,"—
Who knows—my "poor Miss Tox!"

DAISY'S VALENTINES.

ALL night through Daisy's sleep, it seems,
Have ceaseless "rat-tats" thundered;
All night through Daisy's rosy dreams
Have devious Postmen blundered,
Delivering letters round her bed,—
Mysterious missives, sealed with red,
And franked of course with due Queen's-head,—
While Daisy lay and wondered.

But now, when chirping birds begin,
And Day puts off the Quaker,—
When Cook renews her morning din,
And rates the cheerful baker,—
She dreams her dream no dream at all,
For, just as pigeons come at call,
Winged letters flutter down, and fall
Around her head, and wake her.

Yes, there they are! With quirk and twist,
And fraudful arts directed;
(Save Grandpapa's dear stiff old "fist,"
Through all disguise detected;)

But which is his,—her young Lothair's,—
Who wooed her on the school-room stairs
With three sweet cakes, and two ripe pears,
In one neat pile collected?

'Tis there, be sure. Though truth to speak,
(If truth may be permitted),
I doubt that young "gift-bearing Greek"
Is scarce for fealty fitted;
For has he not (I grieve to say),
To two loves more, on this same day,
In just this same emblazoned way,
His transient vows transmitted?

He *may* be true. Yet, Daisy dear,
That even youth grows colder
You'll find is no new thing, I fear;
And when you're somewhat older,
You'll read of one Dardanian boy
Who "wooed with gifts" a maiden coy,—
Then took the morning train to Troy,
In spite of all he'd told her.

But wait. Your time will come. And then,
Obliging Fates, please send her
The bravest thing you have in men,
Sound-hearted, strong, and tender;—

The kind of man, dear Fates, you know,
That feels how shyly Daisies grow,
And what soft things they are, and so
Will spare to spoil or mend her.

IN TOWN.

"*The blue fly sung in the pane.*"—TENNYSON.

TOILING in Town now is "horrid,"
(There is that woman again !)—
June in the zenith is torrid,
Thought gets dry in the brain.

There is that woman again :
"Strawberries ! fourpence a pottle !"
Thought gets dry in the brain ;
Ink gets dry in the bottle.

"Strawberries ! fourpence a pottle !"
Oh for the green of a lane !—
Ink gets dry in the bottle ;
"Buzz" goes a fly in the pane !

Oh for the green of a lane,
Where one might lie and be lazy !
"Buzz" goes a fly in the pane ;
Bluebottles drive me crazy !

Where one might lie and be lazy,
  Careless of Town and all in it!—
Bluebottles drive me crazy:
  I shall go mad in a minute!

Careless of Town and all in it,
  With some one to soothe and to still you;—
I shall go mad in a minute;
  Bluebottle, then I shall kill you!

With some one to soothe and to still you,
  As only one's feminine kin do,—
Bluebottle, then I shall kill you:
  There now! I've broken the window!

As only one's feminine kin do,—
  Some muslin-clad Mabel or May!—
There now! I've broken the window!
  Bluebottle's off and away!

Some muslin-clad Mabel or May,
  To dash one with eau de Cologne;—
Bluebottle's off and away;
  And why should I stay here alone!

To dash one with eau de Cologne,
All over one's eminent forehead ;—
And why should I stay here alone !
Toiling in Town now is "horrid."

A SONNET IN DIALOGUE.

FRANK (*on the Lawn*).

COME to the Terrace, May,—the sun is low.

MAY (*in the House*).

Thanks, I prefer my Browning here instead.

FRANK.

There are two peaches by the strawberry bed.

MAY.

They will be riper if we let them grow.

FRANK.

Then the Park-aloe is in bloom, you know.

MAY.

Also, her Majesty Queen Anne is dead.

FRANK.

But surely, May, your pony must be fed.

MAY.

And was, and is. I fed him hours ago.
'Tis useless, Frank, you see I shall not stir.

FRANK.

Still, I had something you would like to hear.

MAY.

No doubt some new frivolity of men.

FRANK.

Nay,—'tis a thing the gentler sex deplores
Chiefly, I think . . .

MAY (*coming to the window*).

What is this secret, then?

FRANK (*mysteriously*).

There are no eyes more beautiful than yours!

GROWING GRAY.

"*On a l'âge de son cœur.*"—A. D'HOUDETOT.

A LITTLE more toward the light;—
Me miserable! Here's one that's white;
And one that's turning;
Adieu to song and "salad days;"
My Muse, let's go at once to Jay's,
And order mourning.

We must reform our rhymes, my Dear,—
Renounce the gay for the severe,—
Be grave, not witty;
We have, no more, the right to find
That Pyrrha's hair is neatly twined,—
That Chloe's pretty.

Young Love's for us a farce that's played;
Light canzonet and serenade
No more may tempt us;
Gray hairs but ill accord with dreams;
From aught but sour didactic themes
Our years exempt us.

Indeed ! You really fancy so ?
You think for one white streak we grow
At once satiric ?
A fiddlestick ! Each hair's a string
To which our gray-beard Muse shall sing
A younger lyric.

The heart's still sound. Shall "cakes and ale"
Grow rare to youth because *we* rail
At schoolboy dishes ?
Perish the thought ! 'Tis ours to sing
When neither Time nor Tide can bring
Belief with wishes.

VARIA.

THE MALTWORM'S MADRIGAL.

I DRINK of the Ale of Southwark, I drink of the Ale of Chepe;
At noon I dream on the settle; at night I cannot sleep;
For my love, my love it groweth; I waste me all the day;
And when I see sweet Alison, I know not what to say.

The sparrow when he spieth his Dear upon the tree,
He beateth to his little wing; he chirketh lustily;
But when I see sweet Alison, the words begin to fail;
I wot that I shall die of Love—an I die not of Ale.

Her lips are like the muscadel; her brows are black as ink;
Her eyes are bright as beryl stones that in the tankard wink;
But when she sees me coming, she shrilleth out—"Te-Hee!
Fye on thy ruddy nose, Cousin, what lackest thou of me?"

"Fye on thy ruddy nose, Cousin! Why be thine eyes so small?
Why go thy legs tap-lappetty like men that fear to fall?

Why is thy leathern doublet besmeared with stain and spot?
Go to. Thou art no man (she saith)—thou art a Pottle-pot!"

"No man," i'faith. "No man!" she saith. And "Pottle-pot" thereto!
"Thou sleepest like our dog all day; thou drink'st as fishes do."
I would that I were Tibb the dog; he wags at her his tail;
Or would that I were fish, perdy,—and all the sea were Ale!

So I drink of the Ale of Southwark, I drink of the Ale of Chepe;
All day I dream in the sunlight; I dream and eke I weep,
But little lore of loving can any flagon teach,
For when my tongue is looséd most, then most I lose my speech.

AN APRIL PASTORAL.

He.

WHITHER away, fair Neat-herdess?
She. Shepherd, I go to tend my kine.
He. Stay thou, and watch this flock of mine.
She. With thee? Nay, that were idleness.
He. Thy kine will pasture none the less.
She. Not so: they wait me and my sign.
He. I'll pipe to thee beneath the pine.
She. Thy pipe will soothe not their distress.
He. Dost thou not hear beside the spring
How the gay birds are carolling?
She. I hear them. But it may not be.
He. Farewell then, Sweetheart! Farewell now.
She. Shepherd, farewell——Where goest thou?
He. I go . . to tend thy kine for thee!

A NEW SONG OF THE SPRING GARDENS.

To the Burden of "Rogues All."

COME hither ye gallants, come hither ye maids,
To the trim gravelled walks, to the shady arcades;
Come hither, come hither, the nightingales call;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall! Vauxhall!

Come hither, ye cits, from your Lothbury hives!
Come hither, ye husbands, and look to your wives!
For the sparks are as thick as the leaves in the Mall;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall! Vauxhall!

Here the 'prentice from Aldgate may ogle a Toast!
Here his Worship must elbow the knight of the post!
For the wicket is free to the great and the small;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall! Vauxhall!

Here Betty may flaunt in her mistress's sack!
Here Trip wear his master's brocade on his back!
Here a hussy may ride, and a rogue take the wall;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall! Vauxhall!

Here Beauty may grant, and here Valour may ask !
Here the plainest may pass for a Belle (in a mask) !
Here a domino covers the short and the tall ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

'Tis a type of the world, with its drums and its din ;
'Tis a type of the world, for when once you come in
You are loth to go out ; like the world 'tis a ball ;—
Sing *Tantarara*,—Vauxhall ! Vauxhall !

A LOVE-SONG.

(XVIII. CENT.)

WHEN first in CELIA's ear I poured
A yet unpractised pray'r,
My trembling tongue sincere ignored
The aids of "sweet" and fair."
I only said, as in me lay,
I'd strive her "worth" to reach;
She frowned, and turned her eyes away,—
So much for truth in speech.

Then DELIA came. I changed my plan;
I praised her to her face;
I praised her features,—praised her fan,
Her lap-dog and her lace;
I swore that not till Time were dead
My passion should decay;
She, smiling, gave her hand, and said
'Twill last then—for a DAY.

OF HIS MISTRESS.

(*After Anthony Hamilton.*)

To G. S.

SHE that I love is neither brown nor fair,
And, in a word her worth to say,
There is no maid that with her may
Compare.

Yet of her charms the count is clear, I ween:
There are five hundred things we see,
And then five hundred too there be,
Not seen.

Her wit, her wisdom are direct from Heaven:
But the sweet Graces from their store
A thousand finer touches more
Have given.

Her cheek's warm dye what painter's brush could note?
Beside her Flora would be wan,
And white as whiteness of the swan
Her throat.

Her supple waist, her arm from Venus came,
Hebe her nose and lip confess,
And, looking in her eyes, you guess
Her name.

THE NAMELESS CHARM.

(*Expanded from an Epigram of Piron.*)

STELLA, 'tis not your dainty head,
Your artless look, I own;
'Tis not your dear coquettish tread,
Or this, or that, alone;

Nor is it all your gifts combined;
'Tis something in your face,—
The untranslated, undefined,
Uncertainty of grace,

That taught the Boy on Ida's hill
To whom the meed was due;
All three have equal charms—but still
This one I give it to!

TO PHIDYLE.

(HOR. III., 23.)

INCENSE, and flesh of swine, and this year's grain,
At the new moon, with suppliant hands, bestow,
O rustic Phidyle! So naught shall know
Thy crops of blight, thy vine of Afric bane,
And hale the nurslings of thy flock remain
Through the sick apple-tide. Fit victims grow
'Twixt holm and oak upon the Algid snow,
Or Alban grass, that with their necks must stain
The Pontiff's axe: to thee can ill avail
Thy modest gods with much slain to assail,
Whom myrtle crowns and rosemary can please.
Lay on the altar a hand pure of fault;
More than rich gifts the Powers it shall appease,
Though pious but with meal and crackling salt.

BALLADES AND RONDEAUS.

A BALLAD OF HEROES.

"Now all your victories are in vain."
—Mary F. Robinson.

BECAUSE you passed, and now are not,—
Because, in some remoter day,
Your sacred dust from doubtful spot
Was blown of ancient airs away,—
Because you perished,—must men say
Your deeds were naught, and so profane
Your lives with that cold burden? Nay,
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

Though, it may be, above the plot
That hid your once imperial clay,
No greener than o'er men forgot
The unregarding grasses sway;—
Though there no sweeter is the lay
From careless bird,—though you remain
Without distinction of decay,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

No. For while yet in tower or cot
Your story stirs the pulses' play;
And men forget the sordid lot—
The sordid care, of cities gray;—
While yet, beset in homelier fray,
They learn from you the lesson plain
That Life may go, so Honour stay,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

ENVOY.

Heroes of old! I humbly lay
The laurel on your graves again;
Whatever men have done, men may,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain.

THE BALLAD OF THE THRUSH.

ACROSS the noisy street
I hear him careless throw
One warning utterance sweet;
Then faint at first, and low,
The full notes closer grow;
Hark! what a torrent gush!
They pour, they overflow—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

What trick, what dream's deceit
Has fooled his fancy so
To scorn of dust and heat?
I, prisoned here below,
Feel the fresh breezes blow;
And see, thro' flag and rush,
Cool water sliding slow—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

Sing on. What though thou beat
On that dull bar, thy foe!
Somewhere the green boughs meet
Beyond the roofs a-row;

Somewhere the blue skies show,
Somewhere no black walls crush
Poor hearts with hopeless woe—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

ENVOY.

BIRD, though they come, we know,
The empty cage, the hush;
Still, ere the brief day go,
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

THE BALLAD OF THE BARMECIDE.

(BALLADE.)

TO one in Eastern clime,—'tis said,—
There came a man at eve with "Lo!
Friend, ere the day be dimmed and dead,
Hast thou a mind to feast, and know
Fair cates, and sweet wine's overflow?"
To whom that other fain replied—
"Lead on. Not backward I nor slow;—
Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

Thereon the bidder passed and led
To where, apart from dust and glow,
They found a board with napery spread,
And gold, and glistering cups a-row.
"Eat," quoth the host, yet naught did show.
To whom his guest—"Thy board is wide;
But barren is the cheer, I trow;
Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

"Eat"—quoth the man not less, and fed
From meats unseen, and made as though

He drank of wine both white and red.
"Eat,—ere the day to darkness grow.
Short space and scant the Fates bestow!"
What time his guest him wondering eyed,
Muttering in wrath his beard below—
"Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

ENVOY.

LIFE,—'tis of thee they fable so.
Thou bidd'st us eat, and still denied,
Still fasting, from thy board we go:—
"Where is *thy* feast, O Barmecide?"

TO A JUNE ROSE.

(To A. P.)

O ROYAL Rose! the Roman dress'd
His feast with thee; thy petals press'd
Augustan brows; thine odour fine,
Mix'd with the three-times-mingled wine,
Lent the long Thracian draught its zest.

What marvel then, if host and guest,
By Song, by Joy, by Thee caress'd,
Half-trembled on the half-divine,
O royal Rose!

And yet—and yet—I love thee best
In our old gardens of the West,
Whether about my thatch thou twine,
Or Hers, that brown-eyed maid of mine,
Who lulls thee on her lawny breast,
O royal Rose!

TO DAFFODILS.

(To A. J. M.)

O YELLOW flowers that HERRICK sung!
O yellow flowers that danced and swung
In WORDSWORTH'S verse, and now to me,
Unworthy, from this "pleasant lea,"
Laugh back, unchanged and ever young;—

Ah, what a text to us o'erstrung,
O'erwrought, o'erreaching, hoarse of lung,
You teach by that immortal glee,
O yellow flowers!

We, by the Age's œstrus stung,
Still hunt the New with eager tongue,
Vexed ever with the Old, but ye,
What ye have been ye still shall be,
When we are dust the dust among,
O yellow flowers!

ON THE HURRY OF THIS TIME.

(To F. G.)

WITH slower pen men used to write,
Of old, when "letters" were "polite";
In Anna's, or in George's days,
They could afford to turn a phrase
Or trim a straggling theme aright.

They knew not steam; electric light
Not yet had dazed their calmer sight;
They meted out both blame and praise
With slower pen.

Too swiftly now the Hours take flight!
What's read at morn is dead at night:
Scant space have we for Art's delays,
Whose breathless thought so briefly stays,
We may not work—ah! would we might!—
With slower pen.

"A SABINE FARM."

(To J. S.)

"A SABINE farm!" Ah would I knew,
Dear S., of one at Barnes or Kew!
Some "neat retreat,"—in auction phrase,—
Where one might nurture bees and bays!—
A freehold, with the Thames in view!

Not mean the craft that I pursue:
Still I could scarce, whate'er my due,
Acquire—the Muse so meanly pays—
A Sabine farm!

But you, benignant Friend and true,
Whom Corn makes rich as any Jew,
Bethink you now, while summer stays,
The bard should hear the linnet's lays;—
How nice (for Me) 'twould be had you
A Sabine farm!

EXTREMUM TANAIN.

(To J. K.)

BEFORE thy doors too long of late,
O Lyce, I bewail my fate;
Not Don's barbarian maids, I trow,
Would treat their luckless lovers so;
Thou,—thou alone art obstinate.

Hast thou nor eyes nor ears, Ingrate!
Hark! how the NORTH WIND shakes thy gate!
Look! how the laurels bend with snow
Before thy doors!

Lay by thy pride,—nor hesitate,
Lest Love and I grow desperate;
If prayers, if gifts for naught must go,
If naught my frozen pallor show,—
Beware! . . . . I shall not always wait
Before thy doors!

"IN AFTER DAYS."

IN after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honoured dust,
I shall not question nor reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying—"He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

NOTES.

NOTES.

"*A skill Préville would not disown.*"—PAGE 23.

PRÉVILLE was the French Foote, *circa* 1760.

MOLLY TREFUSIS.—PAGE 32.

The epigram here quoted from "an old magazine" is to be found in the late Lord Neaves's admirable little volume, *The Greek Anthology* (*Blackwood's Ancient Classics for English Readers*). Those familiar with eighteenth-century literature will recognize in the succeeding verses but another echo of those lively stanzas of John Gay to "Molly Mogg of the Rose," which found so many imitators in his own day. Whether my heroine is to be identified with a certain "Miss Trefusis," whose *Poems* are sometimes to be found in the second-hand booksellers' catalogues, I know not. But if she is, I trust I have done her accomplished shade no wrong.

AN EASTERN APOLOGUE.—PAGE 42.

The initials "E. H. P." are those of the late eminent (and ill-fated) Orientalist, Professor Palmer. As my lines entirely owed their origin to his translations of Zoheir, I sent them to him. He

was indulgent enough to praise them warmly. It is true he found anachronisms; but as he said these would cause no disturbance to orthodox Persians, I concluded I had succeeded in my little *pastiche*, and, with his permission, inscribed it to him. I wish now that it had been a more worthy tribute to one of the most erudite and versatile scholars this age has seen.

A Revolutionary Relic.—Page 46.

"373. St. Pierre (Bêrnardin de), *Paul et Virginie*, 12mo, old calf. Paris, 1787. This copy is pierced throughout by a bullet-hole, and bears on one of the covers the words: '*à Lucile St. A . . . chez M Batemans, à Edmonds-Bury, en Angleterre*,' very faintly written in pencil." (Extract from Catalogue.)

"*Did she wander like that other?*"—Page 48.

Lucile Desmoulins. See Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Book vi. Chap. ii.

"*And its tender rain shall lave it.*"—Page 50.

It is by no means uncommon for an editor to interrupt some of these Revolutionary letters by a "Here there are traces of tears."

"*You begged his hair, you kept his name.*"—Page 61.

When *The Jessamy Bride* was first printed, by a slip of the pen I wrote "Glyn" for "Gwyn." It was a fortunate error; for it brought me a letter from one of her descendants, who still possesses her portrait, together with the identical lock, which, at her request, was cut from Goldsmith's hair, while yet he lay in his coffin. (Cf. Forster's *Goldsmith*, bk. iv., ch. 21.)

"*By 'Bysshe,' his epithet.*"—PAGE 78.

i.e. *The Art of English Poetry*, by Edward Bysshe, 1702.

THE BOOK-PLATE'S PETITION.—PAGE 84.

These lines were reprinted from *Notes and Queries* in Mr. Andrew Lang's delightful volume *The Library*, 1881, where the curious will find full information as to the enormities of the book-mutilators.

"*Have I not writ thy Laws?*"—PAGE 90

The lines in italic type which follow, are freely paraphrased from the ancient *Code d'Amour* of the XIIth Century, as given by André le Chapelain himself

"*Neither as* LOCKE *was nor as* BLAKE."—PAGE 100.

The Shire Hall at Taunton, where these verses were read at the unveiling, by Mr. James Russell Lowell, of Miss Margaret Thomas's bust of Fielding, September 4th, 1883, also contains busts of Admiral Blake and John Locke.

"*The Journal of his middle-age.*"—PAGE 103.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the reference here is to the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, published posthumously in February, 1755,—a record which for pathos and dignity may be compared with the letter and dedication which Fielding's predecessor and model, Cervantes, prefixed to his last romance of *Persiles and Sigismunda*.

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON.—PAGE 105.

These verses appeared in the *Saturday Review* for February 14th, 1885.

"*With that he made a Leg.*"—PAGE 116.

"JOVE made his Leg and kiss'd the Dame,
Obsequious HERMES did the Same."
PRIOR.

"*So took his Virtù off to Cock's.*"—PAGE 116.

Cock, the auctioneer of Covent Garden, was the Christie and Manson of the last century. The leading idea of this fable, it should be added, is taken from one by Gellert.

'*Of Van's 'Goose-Pie.'*"—PAGE 118.

"At length they in the Rubbish spy
A Thing resembling a Goose Py."
SWIFT'S verses on *Vanbrugh's House*, 1706.

"*The Oaf preferred the 'Tongs and Bones.'*"—PAGE 123.

"I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and the bones."
Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act iv., Sc. i.

"*And sighed o'er Chaos wine for Stingo.*"—PAGE 123.

Squire Homespun probably meant Cahors.

THE WATER-CURE.—PAGE 151.

These verses were suggested by the recollection of an anecdote in Madame de Genlis, which seemed to lend itself to eighteenth-century treatment. It was therefore somewhat depressing, not long after they were written, to find that the subject had already been annexed by an actual eighteenth-century writer, who, moreover, claimed to have founded his story on a contemporary incident. Burton, nevertheless, had told it before him, as early as 1621, in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

"*In Babylonian numbers hidden.*"—PAGE 153.

"— nec Babylonios
Tentaris numeros."
HOR. i., 11.

L'ENVOI.

ABOUT the ending of the Ramadan,
When leanest grows the famished Mussulman,
A haggard ne'er-do-well, Mahmoud by name,
At the tenth hour to Caliph Omar came.
"Lord of the Faithful (quoth he), at the last,
The young moon cometh, and men cease to fast:
Hard then, O hard! the lot of him must be,
Who spares to eat . . but not for piety!"
"Hast then no calling, Friend?"—the Caliph said.
"Sir, I make verses for my daily bread."
"Verse!" answered Omar. "'Tis a dish, indeed,
Whereof but scantily a man may feed.
Go. Learn the tenter's or the potter's art,—
Verse is a drug not sold in any mart!"

I know not if that hungry Mahmoud died;
But this I know, he must have versified,
For with his race, from better still to worse,
The plague of writing follows like a curse;
And men will scribble though they fail to dine,
Which is the Moral of more books than mine.

AVTANT
ICY
QV'AILLEVRS